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CHILDREN'S STORIES AND NEGOTIATED IDENTITIES:

BAKHTIN AND COMPLEXITY IN UPPER PRIMARY CLASSROOMS IN JAMAICA AND SCOTLAND.

BY BETH CROSS



DECLARATION

I, Amy Beth Cross, declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

23 August 2002

(date)

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The words that follow are all borrowed, as Bakhtin would say, and leave me in the debt of many. Most of the words I have not only borrowed, but pulled, stretched, spun, and dreamed to such an extent that I call them mine, which means I must also take responsibility for the mistakes and misinterpretations that I have worked into the following pages as well.

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*Dedicated to Monica Fooks
for the continued meaning her life has in mine,
and to Sarah Hickman
for the inspiration she will always be to me.*

ABSTRACT:

Taking as a starting point the need to excavate assumptions of northern educational practice as normative or standard setting, this research project examines the interface between home and school cultures and the consequences for children's learning strategies in their upper primary years at Scottish and Jamaican schools. Particular attention is paid to how metaphors and narratives are encoded differently in school culture than in children's popular culture. Several different studies show that learners make crucial conceptual decisions about their identities and strategies through these years of development. Both strategies and identities are embedded within the on-going narratives that learners receive, retell, and revise. These stories interplay with the meta-narratives of the cultural settings learners inhabit. These meta-narratives include those of child development, economic development and educational policy; they contrast, sometimes sharply, with powerful forms of expression and narratives within popular culture. Drawing on insights from educational ethnography and socio-linguistics and taking into account the differing meanings that post-industrial or post-development might have in each context, the study is a dialogue with children and teachers about how they represent and make sense of school in the context of the complex and quickly changing popular culture that surrounds them.

The study begins with a consideration of how Bakhtin's unique perspective on language and discourse can be applied to cross cultural educational research, particularly what insights his approach contributes to grappling with the problem of the ethnocentricity of the hermeneutic circle. In the process the differing ways Bakhtin has been taken up by educational and discourse researchers such as Wertsch, Hall, and Maybin are examined. The resulting approach is then applied to two classrooms in each country setting. The picture that emerges is one in which the dominant metaphors of education and the attendant constructs of childhood clash against children's lived experience and increasing engagement with popular and high tech culture. Children's ability to "sample" stories' multiple possibilities and to borrow infectiously from each other defies the linear construct of story or narrative as taught in the syllabus, yet, coincides with Bakhtin's understanding of language and communication as fundamentally dialogic. Teachers, who were sensitive to these differences and who found ways of mediating between them, helped the children make communication transitions by valuing intermediate mixtures of formal and informal communication. The classrooms in which gaps and absences in communication created cultural dissonances were typified by either too much formality (order) or erratic swings between formality and informality (chaos). The concept of emergence is applicable to these classrooms. The study of complex systems has revealed that, in a system where there is either too much order or too much chaos, very little that is interesting or innovative happens. The in-between flexible state of complexity, though not predictable, is productive. Significantly, teachers in all settings indicated that teacher training had not prepared them to help children make these communication transitions or to deal with other language issues they considered important.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

People are constantly struggling, not merely to figure out what a text means, but to make it mean something that connects to their own lives, experiences, needs and desires.

(Grossberg 1992: 52)

Implicit in all this is the notion that a truly creative alchemical response to crises and conflict and deprivation--a response that engages with formidable myth--may well come from the other side of a centralised or dominant civilization, from extremities from apparently irrelevant imaginations and resources. The complacencies of centralized ruling powers where language tends to sometimes become a tool of hypocrisies begins to wear thin at the deep margins of being.

(Harris 1999: 89)

WHY THIS RESEARCH?

The research concern at the centre of this study has to do with an everyday common occurrence, so mundane that it is easily overlooked. Every day school children make cultural transitions from the culture of the home to that of school, and, in between that, a third cultural space that of the community, the street and its media counterpart of popular discourse. These are important transitions, yet, as Phelan, Davidson and Cao observe:

Although such transitions frequently require students' efforts and skills, especially when contexts are governed by different values and norms, there has been relatively little study of this process . . . many adolescents are left to navigate transitions without direct assistance from persons in any of their contexts, most notably the school. Further, young people's success in managing these transitions varies widely. Yet, students' competence in moving between settings has tremendous implications for the quality of their lives and their chances of using the educational system as a stepping stone to further education, productive work experiences, and a meaningful adult life. (1991: 224)

In the decade since their quantitative study, much research has been done examining the transitions inherent within early childhood education. Yet, as Luke and Luke

argue, much of this emphasis on early childhood education is driven by a policy agenda that seeks to reposition children and their parents within a larger global economic framework. Luke and Luke ask whether the emphasis on early education initiatives is not an attempt "to inoculate early childhood with a healthy dose of print culture and attitude as a remediation to postmodern, technologically-mediated adolescence" (2001: 106).¹

Yet, just as the physical manifestations of concern for children's safe passage to school lessen after the first few years of schooling, so too the academic attention seems to subside, only to re-emerge at the close of childhood, when the transition to adulthood looms. Interest in youth culture, particularly with deviancy, has a long research tradition. Yet, the middle years until recently remained a black box of sorts. The ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) drew attention to this and commissioned research on middle childhood just as this study was in its beginnings. As this study is finalised, the results of these studies are also entering the public domain (McKendrik 1999; Smith 2000).

If middle childhood has only recently become a prioritised area of research in developed contexts, it has not figured largely in research in developing contexts either. There are a host of practical as well as conceptual reasons for this. The same concentration on fine-tuning early education or worrying about the results of secondary education are replicated in the research literature.

But there are many reasons why the intermediate years deserve a closer look. It can be argued that within these years some of the most important transitions are in effect being made, transitions between childhood and youth identities that involve transitions in intellectual and social development. Key to these transitions are the individuals' interpretations and choices about language. Several studies indicate that as early as a child's fourth year of education they begin to make decisions about their cultural allegiances that strongly shape their subsequent educational trajectories (Labov 1972; Voss 1996; Philips 2001).

¹ Dyson's work must be seen as a notable exception to this attempt to re-inscribe a mono-literate child, as she demonstrates that even young learners are already enmeshed in a range of popular cultural interactions with media. She argues that children's "sense of agency, of possibility, comes from recontextualizing, that is, from rearranging, re-articulating, and stretching their ways with words," (Dyson, 2001: 14), and details the earlier "trajectory" of such interaction.

As Gumperz (1986: 49) asserts: "the gap in achievement between middle and lower class students increases as a function of grade or class level. There is good reason to suspect, therefore, that classroom experience as such plays an important role in determining what is learned." What is this classroom experience; what cultural choices confront learners within its daily routines? If these questions are not luxuries but crucial in first world settings, how much more critical are they to communities where resources are scarce and the consequences of educational failure more stark?

As Akinnaso points out these are questions for underprivileged communities around the globe:

Many learners fail to successfully complete their training not because of cognitive deficiencies or some specific incapacities but because many of the various demands of schooling and formal learning are discontinuous with those of everyday life and practical learning. These discontinuities are compounded when the school system is based on cultural and linguistic practices that are markedly different from those of the learners. Yet, this is exactly the situation in many developing countries and in many poor and minority neighbourhoods in so-called post-industrial societies. (1991: 72)

What can be learned from examining both the situation for poor neighbourhoods in so-called post industrial societies alongside the post colonial situation in developing countries? The dynamics of globalisation (Giddens 1999) at work in the last decade, which operate with increasing disrespect for traditional boundaries, no longer make it possible to speak meaningfully of countries as unified wholes. Across countries there are nodes or centres of information activity, which exist side by side spatially with areas of relative poverty. Thus it is not correct to speak of information rich countries, or, indeed, even information rich cities. As Bauman has commented "the process of globalisation under its current form² is as much a process of separation and exclusion as it is of integration and convergence" (1998: 3)³. What can be learned from studying the different kinds of exclusion experienced within differing cultural contexts? How can these usefully be compared to instances of inclusion? Using narrative as an organising principle and a vehicle of comparison, this study

² To speak of globalisation as one form is itself an oversimplification. As Bates (2000) points out, even in economic terms alone, there are three distinct Asian versions of globalisation competing with the Western- neo-liberal form.

³ Louisy (2001: 432) reiterates this same point from a Caribbean perspective and goes on to speculate "whether the region is to be the scavenger of civilisation or the inheritor of rainbow possibilities and the creator of new sensibilities" as a result of globalisation.

addresses these questions. It does so by contrasting fieldwork in Scotland and Jamaica.

WHY NARRATIVE?

Across the social sciences a turn towards narrative has been announced, meaning differing things in different disciplines, but often associated with the postmodern deconstruction of grand narratives into multiple competing narratives, and to the assertion that all is construct and text. Inquiry is still turning and now enters, as Lincoln and Denzin (2000) note, a sixth moment of reconceptualising what has been deconstructed. These reconstructed projects make more modest contextualised claims, no longer seeking universal truths but concrete, mutually recognised, valid accounts specifically grounded⁴. This research project is framed within such a stance. Moreover it is grounded in the sense that narratives are inherently social, and the social inherently narrative:

Insofar as we account for our own actions and for the human events around us principally in terms of narrative, it is conceivable that our sensitivity to narrative provides the major link between our own sense of self and our sense of others in the social world around us. (Bruner 1986: 69)

Cruikshank quoting Johnson's *The Body in the Mind*, comments, "though much of academic literature seems to universalise or to work against the notion that people lead storied lives in distinctive ways:

⁴ Lincoln and Denzin specifically draw on the notion of story to locate the present research predicament, "The old story will no longer do, but the new story is not in place. And so we look for pieces of the story, the ways of telling it and the elements that will make it whole, but it hasn't come to us yet . . . so we try to cobble together a story that we are beginning to suspect will never enjoy the unity, the smoothness, the wholeness that the old story had" (1994: 425). Strikingly, this characterisation sounds very similar to how Csordas describes changing concepts of body and embodiment, "the end of one kind of body and the beginning of another kind of body" (1994: 1).

When it comes to explaining how it is that humans experience their world in ways that they can make sense of, there must be a central place for the notion of 'narrative unity'. Not only are we born into complex communal narratives, we also experience, understand and order our lives as stories that we are living out. Whatever human rationality consists in, it is certainly tied up with narrative structure and the question of narrative unity." (Johnson quoted in Cruikshank 1999: 21)

This study, then, looks at what ways narratives contribute to children's emerging identities. The forms their narratives take and the themes their narratives explore interact to form a complex picture of their daily journeys across the cultures of home, community and school. These complex pictures testify to the power of classroom culture to either enable or impede children's developing flexibility and fluency of expression. Yet, classroom culture must contend with another powerful cultural force that of popular culture. In pointing out radical educators' failure to understand the importance of popular culture and its role in the affective nature of learning, Giroux and Simon write:

The production of meaning and the production of pleasure are mutually constitutive of who students are, the view they have of themselves, and how they construct a particular version of their future. . . The formation of identities takes place through attachments and investments that are as much a question of affect and pleasure as they are of ideology and rationality. (1992: 182-183)

WHY BAKHTIN?

Seeking to understand both narrative and popular culture requires a complex yet flexible approach and quickly leads one in the direction of Bakhtin. Bakhtin underwrites this study, not as Word or Windows 95 may be said to, but as MS DOS underwrites both. He provides the fundamental epistemological and philosophical stance that enables the study. I draw on many contemporary discourse analysts in the course of the study, Wertsch (1991), Hall (1980), Rampton, (1995), Maybin (1994), Limón (1994), Chouliaraki (1997, 1999), Fairclough (1995), Shuman (1986), and Strauss and Quinn (1994), all of whom cite his ideas as seminal to the development of their own analysis. As Giroux has written:

Bakhtin's work is important because it views language use as an eminently social and political act linked to the ways individuals define meaning and author their relations to the world through an ongoing dialogue with others. . . Bakhtin deepens our understanding of the nature of authorship by providing

illuminating analyses of how people give value to and operate out of different layers of discourse. (1988:181-182)

The question could, however, be asked with a different inflection, why (of all people?) Bakhtin? Has not post-modernism cast doubt on the intellectual thought of that era? He is a curious choice one would think, yet, the interest in Bakhtin has increased as affirmative resolutions to post modern critique are more urgently sought. However, he does not lay out in a straightforward manner any systematic approach to analysis. He has not made it easy for a paradigm or an academic industry to be built upon his work. He offers elliptical criticism of those that do. His most fundamental postulates that break with standard literary theory are implied rather than overtly stated. His writing style is circuitous and given to numerous tangential diversions. Yet, all of these criticisms of his writing can also be seen as exemplifying exactly what he seeks to argue is important: that all language use is part of an ongoing dialogue. These very aspects of his writing pointedly lead his reader to look towards the dialogue from which his words take shape.

WHY THIS RESEARCHER?

The primary reason Bakhtin plays such a prominent role in outlining the epistemological stance of this study, is that his ideas and his way of relating them resonate strongly with precisely the thorny predicaments and paradoxical conditions that several years' experience of working in community education have convinced me are at the heart of education's most fundamental problems. This practitioner experience, often repairing the damage done in learners' previous educational encounters, leads to a research stance concerned with the issues and perspectives of literacy studies (Barton 1995; Keller-Cohen 1994; The New London Group 1996), that are markedly different than those that are centred within educational policy, curriculum and management agendas. This study does not have much in common with international and comparative educational research as it is most commonly practised. It does have in common with the discipline, as Broadfoot (2000) believes it should become, a fundamental and orientating interest in life long learning⁵. The aim of the study is not to assess how well interactions meet the stated learning objectives as defined by education policy, but rather to explore what sense,

⁵ Crossley and Jarvis also note that "broadening of discourses, literatures and experiences has much to offer in the revitalisation and advancement of the field itself" (2001: 405).

what relevance, children make of their school interaction. Largely this task is to understand how children make sense of the educational trade off they are faced with. Bernstein (1977:58) aptly encapsulated their dilemma: "children are asked to accept the immediate irrelevancy of much in the curriculum and believe in its future relevancy". Examining if and to what extent they do agree to this bargain means focusing upon the day to day choices through which this bargain is expressed within the immediate context and with its specific criteria. There is an awareness of curriculum development concerns and policy debates, but that is not the focus of this research. For, as Alexander (2000) observes, outcomes in classrooms are often not so much a matter of which curriculum, but rather how it is enacted in specific contexts amongst specific people.

WHY THESE RESEARCH SITES?

Why a cross cultural study is an interesting question to ask in this era of conflicting definitions and agendas for globalisation. The primary concern meant a re-engagement with practices closer to home, and, in fact, a deconstruction of the concept of home itself⁶. This was a process of extracting beams before attempting to locate splinters. The critique of the invisible normality of whiteness⁷ (Dyer 1997; hooks (sic) 1995) while gaining a wider hearing in cultural studies and related disciplines has still to percolate into mainstream educational discourse, Mac an Ghail (1994) being a notable exception. This critique raises itself as a particular need to be addressed given the research concern. And so the research process began at home, making the familiar strange.

Home suggests a critical destabilising gesture. It refers to the cultural, social and political boundaries that demarcate varying spaces of comfort, suffering, abuse and security that define an individual's or groups location and positionality. To move away from "home" is to question in historical semiotic,

⁶As Tucker points out, "Fanon forced the European metropolis to think its history together with the history of the colonies it created and exploited." I would add deconstructing First World educational practices is an important component of preparing for a process of dialogue "that does justice to the social imaginary of Third World peoples without first reconstructing them in our terms before meeting them" (1999: 23).

⁷As Dyer comments, "There is a specificity to white representation, but it does not reside in a set of stereotypes so much as in narrative structural positions, rhetorical tropes and habits of perception" (1997: 12).

structural terms how the boundaries and meanings of “home” are often constructed. (Giroux 1994: 143)

In some respects Scotland was home, in Giroux’s terms, a place of comfort. In others the process of research revealed, it was not. There are theoretical, historical and methodological reasons for locating a comparison specifically between sites in Scotland and in the Caribbean. The most seminal theories in post colonial reconfiguring of power dynamics flow from the encounters, engagements and continued contests in the Caribbean. If one thinks of the contributions of Garvey, Blyden, C.L.R. James, Fannon, Hall, Walcott, Nettleford, Glissant, Braithwaite, Harris and Meeks, what is striking is that all of these thinkers, in their work and lives crossed disciplinary and conceptual boundaries between the humanities and social sciences to create new insights and new terms of engagement.

In practical terms, the nuanced fluid character of the interaction I was hoping to understand also suggested this set of contrasting sites. Historically these two areas have been learning from each other for a long time (Dobson 1997; Fry 2001). A product of this long, invasive, historical interaction is that the languages are far more inter-related than where interaction has been less intrusive.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The research process can be divided up into three distinct phases, pre-field work, fieldwork and post fieldwork. The first three chapters deal with the conceptual and practical tools developed for the study. Chapter Two deals with the theoretical ideas and concepts, how they came to be developed, as well as their relevance to this particular piece of research. Through an exploration of what Bakhtin’s dialogic discourse means as developed by Wertsch (1991), the concept of narrative as a practice embedded within every day discourse is derived. The chapter goes on to examine how Bakhtin’s concepts of embodied knowledge and carnival dynamics can enhance an understanding of children’s popular culture and how complexity concepts, such as fractals, can augment Bakhtinian concepts by offering new ways to envision interaction and discourse. The chapter concludes by examining both the process of interpretation that is dialogic rather than dialectic that Bakhtin develops, and Hall’s further development of this process into the concept of articulation. Both concepts enable the study to address the serious critiques that have arisen about the ethnocentric bias of much academic research.

A contextualising chapter draws on a number of different sources to provide the backdrop against which the meaning within the substantive chapters should be interpreted. This chapter sets the framework for comparison in the specific localities by first comparing the broader contextual issues embedded in policy and curriculum differences and similarities across the two countries. In this chapter, the key metaphors of education as delineated by Serpell (1993) are examined in light of the particular contexts under consideration. The possibility of new metaphors is raised, such as those stemming from the diffusion of complexity terminology into use in wider society.

In the fourth chapter the rationale for different phases of fieldwork is laid out and the problems and discoveries of the research process are briefly described. As the methodology is a blend of ethnography and discourse analysis, the compatibility of combining these techniques and the philosophical standpoints implicit within them are examined.

These chapters set the parameters for the study; the next four examine the dynamics within that frame. Narrative structures are examined in four classrooms across three different school settings. The first chapter highlights the possibilities of dialogue between informal and formal learning in a Scottish setting. The next two portray different ways in which dialogues are attempted against strong structural constraints in two Jamaican classrooms at the same school. The last setting examined illustrates the results when there is almost utter silence and lack of bridge or dialogue between formal and informal learning practices and settings in a second Scottish setting. This arrangement of chapters indicates the north-south divide was not observed to be the most crucial one. Other more localised cultural factors were more important. Each of the four chapters examines a class as a speech community, the different configurations of discourse opportunities within this grouping and how they interrelate. Thus, each chapter explores the formal discourse within the classroom between teacher and students, the informal discourse between students, as well as the discourse requiring a renegotiation of the other two that both teachers and students developed with the researcher.

The final chapter compares and contrasts both the variability of narrative forms that children adopt in differing settings and highlights the themes and issues within them. Bakhtinian concepts, as interpreted through the prism of complexity, are drawn upon to reframe the specific findings within the globalisation context. The

implications for teacher practice and development are considered before the chapter concludes with an evaluation offered from the perspective of researcher, teachers and children.

OVERVIEW OF THEMES

Children's activities can be broadly divided into play and work. Within these activities conflicts arise that give rise to a third kind of activity of dispute and violence. These disputes are both between children and between adults and children. What do conflicts reveal about normality? What are the differing perceptions and definitions of what constitutes violence or transgression?

In contrast to the conception of play as children interacting in a world of their own, the study examines children's frequent recourse to adults in their play discourse. Does the adult ever disappear from children's play discourse or remain, as Bakhtin (1981) describes, in an editorial role as a potential recipient of children's utterances? Often children are imitating adult roles of various kinds, for a variety of reasons. To do so children draw from their knowledge of adults based on life experience and based on media or cultural representations of adults. Tomlinson (1991) raises the question that cultural imperialism resides not in the content of exported culture but in the tipping of the balance away from culture as lived experience and towards culture as representation. This study looks at the balance of cultural experience and asks what role the classroom plays in that balance.

CONCLUSION

Through two cycles of research and a cycle of dialogue between them I explore the issues of horizons and to what extent they overlap. I explore the children's interpretations within their situation, while I also explore my interpretations across situations. Seeking not generalisations but how actors negotiate changing situations, revealing differences in how communities deal with and understand limits, this study traces plausible stories, adaptable metaphors. In keeping with Bakhtin, this study is envisioned as a text that can be reappropriated, cannibalised or even carnivalised to help others deal with similar situations. What it is hoped readers can take away that will be useful in their continued practice is not definitive answers or findings, but questions that help open out their interpretations of their own work settings in whatever way they may be educational.

Speaking from related, but distinctly different perspectives on educational research, both Wertsch (1991, 1998) and Crossley (1999) make compelling arguments for the need for multidisciplinary approaches and the kind of attention to nuances that qualitative methods can yield.

Tensions between ideas and developments that underpin globalisation on the one hand, and postmodernism on the other, thus generate what may be the most fundamental of all intellectual challenges of the present day. (1999: 259)

Crossley goes on to observe that the interpenetration between individual life and global futures are new and contradictory processes which demand discourses that go beyond deconstruction, and that are affirmative and effectively attuned to cultural differences and multi-polar geopolitics.

It is hoped this study will contribute to the forging of such a discourse that is both affirmative, and appropriate yet reflective and dialogic.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORY

The other who can see the back of my own head helps constitute my personhood.

(Bakhtin 1990)

The man who walks (because that's who it is) has soon come down from the hills; once again he is making sense of the beach. His energy is boundless, his withdrawal absolute. Distant reader, as you recreate these imperceptible details on the horizon, you who can imagine—who can indulge the time and wealth for imagining—so many open and closed places in the world, look at him. . . There is so much of the world to be uncovered that you are able to leave this one person alone in his outlook. But he will not leave you. The shadow he throws from a distance is cast close by you.

(Glissant 1997: 208)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look first at what existing research tells us about the importance of narratives in children's school experience. In the process the concept of narrative will be explored. The work of those who have applied Bakhtin's theoretical framework, particularly that of Wertsch, will be analysed in detail.

As Bakhtin (1981) himself has said and Gee reiterates (1999), our understanding of words grows out of the contexts in which they are used, not dictionaries. In keeping with this stance, I first look at the research in which the theoretical terms central to discourse analysis are employed in research in order to generate definitions, culminating in that for the concept of narrative.

As a whole, the chapter addresses what is meant by narrative, what is meant by dialogic speech, as distinct from dialectic, and what, given these concepts, is required of the interpretation process.

THE RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

A review of recent ethnographic and sociolinguistic work reveals the importance of narrative in children's experience of school. It is important to contextualise this research within what can be described as a previous research deficit. Goldman in 1998 reiterates Schwartz' critique of 1981, that the study of children as competent cultural participants has been neglected. From a policy perspective, Serpell (1993), Wagner (1993), Stephens (1994, 1998) and Crossley (1999), all make the case for an increased focus on studying the cultural contexts in which educational processes are situated as key to developing quality educational policies and practice. Johnson et al. (1998) further specify that an understanding of cultural context needs to include careful consideration of children's competence and agency rather than assuming its lack or absence. More recently, Prout (2000) has argued that an understanding of children's agency must take into consideration children's embodied experiences, which both limit and uniquely nuance their perspectives.

ETHNOGRAPHY

A response to these calls for in-depth cultural research can be found by a cross-disciplinary search of educational ethnography (Hammersley 1990; Winter 1989) and socio-linguistical ethnography of communication as developed by Hymes (1971,1996), Gumperz (1982, 1986) and Labov (1972, 1982) among others.

Some of the most recent ethnographies drawing on this tradition, highlight both the complexity and the importance of narrative. In *Hidden Literacies*, an ethnography of fourth grade children in a whole-language¹ classroom environment, Voss (1996) focuses specifically on comparing the predominant definition of literacy as competency with verbal language with other literacies. She draws on the work of Gardner on multiple intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal)² to describe multiple literacies. She

¹ Whole Language refers to language development practices concerned with contextualising learning within real life uses of literacy. There is an emphasis on meaningful real reading over phonics and basal readers. Alexander (2000) usefully compares the variations in this approach in England and the U.S.

² Voss (1996) qualifies these categories by quoting Gardner's own disclaimer: "These intelligences are fictions—at most useful fictions for discussing processes and abilities that (like all of life) are continuous with one another" (Shuman 1986: 11).

concludes a lack of recognition of these other literacies creates the miscommunication between child and teacher that contributes to school failure. Children's narrative participation in the classroom is key to giving teachers insight into children's worlds, and therefore abilities and literacies.

Shuman (1986) and Hewitt (1986), though they conducted ethnographic research on different continents, with differing age groups, and at a slightly different scale of analysis, nevertheless both dramatise the relation between friendship networks, and the discourse networks, largely comprised of narratives which flow through them. Shuman (1986: 13), citing Bakhtin as influential, stresses that narratives involve and interact with several contexts simultaneously: the context described in the story, the listener's and teller's prior knowledge of contextual information, the inferred context of incident from which the story is drawn, other relevant situations in which participants interact, and the context of the conversation preceding and following the story (1986: 21). Shuman's study emphasises the importance of storytelling for students to mediate between different contexts and to negotiate identities; it is one of the few means at their disposal. She observes that "adolescents have custody over very little else except their bodies and words" (1986: 53).

Similarly, Davies also highlights the importance of narrative and its significance within peer groups, helpfully unpacking the term "peer pressure" often loosely applied to a complex dynamic. Davies describes the fundamental task of socialisation as being accomplished through story:

Each child must locate and take up their own narratives of themselves that knit together the details of their existence. At the same time they must learn to be coherent members of others narratives. Teasing is most usually understood as "peer pressure" where the group chooses to make the individual conform to a more or less arbitrary set of norms. But it can be better understood as the struggle of the group individually and collectively to achieve themselves as knowable individuals within a predictable knowable collective reality. (1993: 17-19)

As Davies describes it, "peer pressure" is essentially a narrative pressure. The pressure or tensions are created between individual narratives and the group narratives in which the individual narratives take up a niche or role.

Narrative is not only used to establish or conform to identity within a peer group but at the same time acts to identify one's relation to other groups and the authority structure of the school environment. Taking up Bakhtin's concept of carnival as a form of social resistance, Shuman describes the adolescents that she observed

playing with language and, through their stories, making innovations within their vernacular, which show up the conventions of Standard English. Quantz and O'Connor (1988) and Chouliaraki (1997) take up Bakhtin's sense of the carnivalesque to interpret what otherwise is dismissed as deviant behaviour:

In this sense, a carnivalesque perspective on unlegitimated classroom culture enables a critical reading of pupil narratives not as an unimportant and trivial world of naughty children talk, but as an alternative and autonomous socio-cultural framework within the school. (Chouliaraki, 1997:19)

Gilmore's related research points out that some competencies are demonstrated in a context of play though absent when demanded within the classroom context. In contrast to the teacher's complaint that "students could not rhyme, do syllabification, develop narrative themes or recognise semantic differences in homonyms," Gilmore observed all of these abilities playfully, dramatically and subversively displayed on the playground in six variations on the jump rope rhyme or "steps" known as "Mississippi" (1986: 159–160).

As I will examine throughout the study, that integral to the concept of carnival is a synthesis of ritual and play and a use of grotesque exaggerated humour. This dynamic is only partially applicable to the social dynamics of school. Power struggles are not always overt, and resistance or refuge is sometimes in the absence of response or silence and is about what is tacitly agreed as not narrated in school spaces. As Mercado (1998) points out, teachers' actions can be used by peers against each other, and teachers can manipulate this peer activity to reinforce their authority, as when a teacher humiliates a student for mis-pronunciations. The teacher's intended impact of ridicule only works if other students collude with the teacher's appeal to humour. Mercado sees the emphasis on oral pronunciation found in many classrooms as, "sanctioned acts of violence" and cites a conclusion from Cullingford's study, which reflects this insight:

Many of the pleasures of school, however, are not spectacular events that give occasional contrast to the routine but certain times of the day when the routine itself was peaceful, when they are not under threat, from humiliation by the teacher or bullying by other children. (Cullingford 1991: 54, quoted in Mercado 1998: 100)

SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Sociolinguistical studies with an approach characterised by fine-grained analysis and attention to complexity yield further insights into what is at stake within the

silences and voices of children's schooling, particularly when children's attempts to borrow their teacher's words are unsuccessful or meet with conflicting understandings and interpretations. The definitive studies of this kind are Labov (1972) and Heath (1983), researched some thirty years ago yet still widely quoted. Both examine in detail children's narratives as they spontaneously occurred in family, peer and school settings. Attention is paid to the social context and dynamics, the linguistic and performative structure, and the metaphorical and imaginative resources that contribute to what children convey in their acts of communication. Both argue powerfully that minority children's linguistic skills are not inferior, but reflect misunderstood cultural practices and in Labov's study of older children, conscious decisions of cultural allegiance. More recent studies have questioned Heath's realist stance (De Castell and Walker 1991: 18) and Labov's objectivist claims (Rampton 1992: 47-54), but within a framework of critical appreciation. One such work, which I will draw on in detail, is that of Michaels (1986). This study examined the interaction between a first grade teacher and her student during "sharing time", an activity which is intended to help the children make a bridge from their oral compositional skills to written compositional skills. Michaels notes that in a class with roughly the same proportion of African-American children and Americans of European extraction, there were distinct differences in intonation patterns and compositional structures between the two groups. African-American children tended to use intonation to signal conjunction and coherence and raised several different topics associated to each other in a complex network, all of which required situational background to understand, a style Michaels terms "topic-associated". In other words, they relied heavily both orally and compositionally on a multidimensional contextualised use of language. More often they relied on a listener's shared contextual knowledge rather than explicitly providing the listener with these links. The Euro-American children's accounts were much more linear, what Michaels refers to as "topic-centred", or, at least, they were more amenable to the teacher's promptings to be understood as such. Their use of intonation and rhythm synchronised much more smoothly with the teacher's interventions, which were intended to guide the child's account into a standard expositional form.³

³ Topic Associative narratives do not conform to the criteria Labov lays down for narratives, particularly the demand that clauses being causally linked in sequential order. Although Labov adjusted his definition over time to take account of clauses

The teacher's expectation that children's accounts be explicit, was itself an implicit one, so inherent within her own enculturation that she never justifies it, thereby making children with a different cultural background, "uncertain as to why their offerings are deemed less successful" (1986: 102). Michaels interviewed one of the first graders a year later to find out what lasting impressions or "lessons" African-American children may have retained from this activity. Her respondent's remarks are quite telling:

She expressed a keen sense of frustration about being interrupted during sharing time. . . explaining, "Sharing time got on my nerves. She was always interruptin' me, sayin' 'that's not important enough' and I hadn't hardly started talkin!"

When asked what kind of response the teacher preferred to hers, the child offered the following example of "good" sharing talk:

Deena: "She just wanted us to, say like / well /
Well yesterday /
Blah blah blah /
Blah blah blah /
Blah ,blah blah blah /
Blah ,blah blah blah
Blah ,blah blah blah //

Deena begins with the sharing time formula, 'yesterday', using pronounced sharing intonation. She then provides an account without words, which is segmented prosodically into what sounds like a beginning (orientation), middle (elaboration) and end (resolution). Interestingly enough this captures precisely the intonational patterns of topic-centred discourse. This indicates that Deena had a sense of what topic-centred discourse sounded like and knew this was what was wanted. (Michaels 1986: 111, emphasis in text)

Deena's response indicates that even at this age children are aware that teachers are asking them to conform to a linguistic school practice and have feelings and opinions about the demand, and, based upon those feelings and opinions, are making decisions about their school strategies, their attitude about school, and their identity in proximation to the school culture. Throughout the study children's varying use of topic associative and topic centred narratives will be examined.

These findings also highlight the importance that intonation plays in conveying meaning and intent. As Bakhtin points out this aspect of utterance can convey the

fulfilling more than one function, the basic format he uses makes his definition an ethno-centric one.

evaluation or the spin within an utterance and an important way in which the meaning of utterances is more than linear, but is polyphonic.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

THE INTERFACE BETWEEN CULTURAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY

Running through the various studies reviewed above are concepts derived from, or in close sympathy with, the insights of Vygotsky and Bakhtin,⁴ such as dialogue, carnival, utterance, and polyphony, all of which require explanation.

Wertsch (1991) was first to examine the theoretical similarities between Bakhtin and Vygotsky and to show the primacy of dialogue to their analysis. Whilst it is largely Bakhtin's cultural theory which I draw upon, it is important to emphasise the theoretical link to Vygotsky's developmental psychology, as the question of children's developmental status cannot be ignored (Prout 2000). In applying Bakhtin's concepts to a Vygotskian understanding of children's psychological development, Wertsch examines differing conceptual models of how development of thought actually happens. This is a crucial question not only for him, but also for this study. He delineates three differing accounts of why there are different modes of thought (heterogeneity) and how they are related to each other in the development process. They are: heterogeneity as genetic hierarchy, heterogeneity despite genetic hierarchy, and nongenetic heterogeneity⁵. The differences between the first two are the most crucial for this study.

⁴ Trueba credits Vygotsky with inspiring an impressive line of research on the social context of learning, which explores the implications of Vygotsky's concept of a "proximal zone of development", beginning with the work at the Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition by Cole, Scribner, Moll, D'Andrade and developed at the University of Hawaii and the University of California at Los Angeles and Santa Barbara by such researchers as Tharp, Gallimore, Trueba and Duran (cited in Trueba 273: 1988). Bakhtin is associated with a more radical line of educational critique such as Giroux's (1988, 1996), critical ethnographers such as Quantz and O'Connor, (1988), and Chouliaraki (1997, 1999). Gee (1994) provides an insightful overview of the changes in conceptualization of literacy in the last two decades that take into account many of these concepts. Edwards and Mercer (1987) have taken this synthesis forward in research here in Britain as have critical sociolinguists such as Rampton (1995).

⁵ Wertsch cites Gilligan's research on differing forms of moral reasoning in support of the third form, heterogeneity without genetic hierarchy which argues the development of

If one adheres to a strict reading of Piaget (Smith 1997), one's perspective is that there is a genetical hierarchy of thought development in which some thought processes are biologically impossible before certain ages or stages of development, that "higher" modes of thought (scientific) develop out of "lower" ones (common sense) and that some thought processes are inherently superior to others, such as abstract reasoning. If one takes this view, this limits the competent agency that one can attribute to a child. It is difficult to talk about children making culturally meaningful choices if one believes they are too young or not sufficiently developed to be able to distinguish between cultural concepts. Wertsch cites many of the researchers quoted within this study as disputing the claims that are made about children's inability at certain stages of development:

The set of assumptions underlying the metaphor of possession has been called into question by a variety of studies in developmental psychology (Donaldson 1978) cross-cultural psychology (Cole and Scribner 1974) "everyday cognition" (Lave 1988; Lave and Rogoff 1984) and in other areas of social science inquiry. In general, these studies have shown that children and adults who were not thought to have a particular ability on the basis of an assessment in one context did in fact demonstrate that ability in other contexts. This is not to say that anyone can demonstrate any ability given the right contextual conditions. What it does say, however, is that the metaphor of possession—a metaphor grounded solidly in the atomistic assumption that in the end individuals either have or do not have an ability—is now recognised as severely limited (Wertsch 1991:94).

Wertsch argues that the second perspective, heterogeneity despite genetic hierarchy, incorporates key Vygotskian and Bakhtinian concepts and allows for a development model in which children from quite a young age are mentally capable of a wider range of thought processes but their development of any one of them is dependent upon their familiarity with the discourses or practices that employ these thought processes. The research previously mentioned illustrates that in differing socio-economic or cultural contexts there are differing emphases on different activities, resulting in variation in the competency children are able to demonstrate. Wertsch draws on Tulviste to stress,

different thought forms develop independently of each other, again as context elicits their appropriateness (Wertsch 1991: 103).

The tendency to make a global opposition between the thinking of people in one culture with that of people in another is misguided. Types of thinking correspond not with different cultures, but with different forms of activity. (1991: 102)

What this stresses is that the context of learning, the opportunities to practise and imitate a certain discourse, or, in other words, the interactive opportunities children have to use a Zone of Proximal Development play a large role in children's developing competency (Cole 1985). This view differs from the first both in its conception of how thought develops and in the value it places on differing kinds of thought. It holds that later forms of thought are not inherently more powerful or efficacious than earlier ones but that each kind of thought will be more appropriate to differing demands or contexts.

It is this view that I adopt. Rather than assuming children cannot have an opinion or cannot understand a concept because of their mental development, it is better to explore if they have had any exposure to the kind of discourse in which that concept is deployed or what, from their experience, can link or serve as grounds for opening up that discourse. It looks to dialogue to make language an enabling condition, with a sense that what limits there are to understanding are open to further negotiation.

The adoption of this view is particularly important for the cross cultural dimension of this study. As Wertsch goes on to state, taking dialogue or interaction as the irreducible unit of analysis counteracts a deeply engrained western bias:

With regard to the irreducibility of the person acting with mediational means as the agent of action, that fact that western scientific and folk theories of mind are so steeped in the atomism and disengaged image of the self outlined by Taylor has resulted in a powerful tendency to lose sight of the role of socioculturally situated mediational means in shaping human action . . . There is a tendency to cast the individual acting in isolation in this role and to assume that any use of mediational means is ancillary or somehow based on some prior and independent individual intention. By asserting that the agent of mental action cannot be reduced either to sign systems or to the individual in isolation, one challenges the assumption that processes and entities that have come to be isolated in (psychology and linguistics) can be so neatly segregated. (1991: 120)

Given the central importance of dialogue, children's previous and on-going dialogues, as well as the dialogue they engage in with the researcher, the relevance of

Bakhtin becomes evident. As Wertsch writes, "dialogicality is the most basic theoretical construct in his approach" (1991: 53).⁶

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF BAKHTIN'S DIALOGUE

Bakhtin's concept of dialogicality needs to be understood within a historical context. There are two historical contexts to consider, the historical context of dialogue, which Bakhtin himself surveys to develop his concepts, and the historical context of Bakhtin himself. Bakhtin in two different treatise gives us an ambivalent view of historical cultural processes. These two works themselves can be seen as in dialogue with each other, a dialogue that reveals not one truth, one overall movement or direction to the development of European culture, but tensions between at least two differing developments. In his treatise on Rabelais he traces the deterioration, the loss of a valuable perspective on truth and the nature of humanity. His celebration of Renaissance laughter, personified by Rabelais, is at once also a critique of Enlightenment's myopic obsession with abstraction and classification. One must keep in mind that Bakhtin wrote this treatise, having already written the essays published as *The Dialogic Imagination* in which he traces a quite different process in play since the Renaissance, the rise of the novel, as he defines it. His definition has little in common with most literacy systems of classification. What is crucial is not the form or even the style of a literary piece but the author's intent, world view and relation to the humanity he creates. He conceives of the novel as a form of dialogue. Contrary to the predominant conception of the development of the novel which centres on the individual as hero as epitomising an increasingly individualistic Western culture, Bakhtin claims the novel is the genre through which multiple perspectives are explored, and portrayed. It is the medium through which the tensions between individuals' truths are best expressed. Bakhtin's plurality of perspectives is not post-structuralist. For him there is an absolute truth, however, the route to it is not Descartes' individual communing only with his own meditations on disembodied thought, but arises out of interaction within community. His conception of the novel has important similarities with the "intertextually embedded and discursive" creative projects of Caribbean thinkers and writers as Henry (2000) outlines them.

⁶ Tucker (1999: 17) relates this same fundamental insight of development discourse.

It is ironic, that one, for whom dialogue is so important, should be absent from the discussions and debates defining the place of his work in academic discourse. His writing (Bakhtin 1981, 1984, 1990) and the writing which discussion with him generated (Medvedev/Bakhtin 1978; Volosinov/Bakhtin 1973) were all developed in the first half of the 20th Century⁷. His two collaborators along with many others of the Bakhtin circle were killed in the Stalinist purges preceding the Second World War. It is believed it was only his ill health that prevented him from sharing their fate. His works were suppressed within the Soviet Union until his rehabilitation in a new era of Soviet politics in the 1960's. Publications of them anywhere in the world did not occur until the last years of his life. Throughout his life, his ideas existed primarily in the dialogues he himself engaged in.

DIALOGUE

In making dialogue the basic concept for understanding language, Bakhtin took a different tack than either the structuralists of his time, or subsequently the post-structuralists of ours. Side-stepping the structuralist distinction between "langue" and "parole", Bakhtin points out that, "after all, it is not from dictionaries that we get our words" (Bakhtin 1981). As Stam summarises the distinctiveness of his approach, Bakhtin:

. . .transcends some of the felt insufficiencies of other theoretical grids. His emphasis on the "situated utterance" and the "interpersonal generation of meaning" helps us avoid both the static ahistoricism of an apolitical "value free" semiotics⁸ and the implicit hermeneutic nihilism of some post-structuralist thought. (Stam 1989: 20⁹)

Thus, his stance can be drawn upon to enable the pragmatic turn that a critique of post-modernism's "nihilism" necessitates (Masemann and Welch 1997)¹⁰.

⁷ Todorov gives the dates for the various publications arising from the Bakhtin Circle as follows: Bakhtin's first work *Art and Answerability* written in 1919, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* is published in Medvedev's name in Leningrad in 1928, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* is published under Volosinov's name in Leningrad 1929; Bakhtin writes the essays of *The Dialogic Imagination* between 1934-1935; his thesis on Rabelais is written in 1940. For a more complete list see Todorov (1984: 121-143).

⁸ For Bakhtin's own critique of Saussure see Bakhtin (1981: 261-66, 354).

⁹ See also Wertsch (1991: 120).

¹⁰ Masemann and Welch (1997) note in the introduction of the issue they edit, "The irony of a mode of analysis which apparently concerns itself with de-centering and thus

Aware that words have multiple meanings that arise from previous power structures, Bakhtin, like Haraway (1988), is concerned with what can be made of this predicament and how most faithfully and purposefully to represent this reality. According to Bakhtin, every choice of word confronts the speaker with elements of foreignness that "borrow" from those dialogues:

The word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!) but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriates them and who now speaks them . . . Language is not a neutral medium . . . it is populated—overpopulated—with the intentions of others. (1981: 294)

At the end of this chapter we shall look more closely at the relevance of these theoretical concepts to the differing cultural contexts in which I seek to deploy them, and in particular what thinkers from those contexts have to say about the cultural dilemmas of their particular context, but at this point I think it is important to draw on one particular Caribbean voice, which has particular resonance with this central statement of Bakhtin. Braithwaite also wants to make clear:

. . . that poetry, the culture itself exists not in a dictionary but in the tradition of the spoken word. . . . That is to say, if you get rid of the noise (or what you would think of as noise shall I say) you lose part of the meaning. When it is written you lose the sound or the noise and therefore you lose part of the meaning. (1984: 17)

For both thinkers the interaction of speech is an essential component. Bakhtin defines dialogue as an exchange of utterances in which each utterance anticipates a response and comes within a flow of responses¹¹. Thoughts are not bounded by individuals but created through interactions. It is interesting to note again the similarity with Vygotsky:

'opening up the institutional and discursive spaces' actually dismissing/decraying social justice and forms of analysis which promote the interests of the dispossessed, is palpable."

¹¹ The importance Bakhtin and his colleagues placed on dialogue is evidenced in their practice of re-attributing the authorship of the books their discussions produced. The recent heated debates over the authorship of the writings of the Bakhtin circle seem to have missed this point.

The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought. In that process, the relation of thought to words undergoes changes that themselves may be regarded as development in the functional sense. Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. (1986: 218)¹²

Maybin (1994: 132) offers a very succinct synopsis of the borrowing that takes place within dialogues:

Bakhtin suggests that there is a complex chaining relationship between utterances and responses both within and across conversations. Every utterance is always also a response, implicitly or explicitly to some previous utterance either from within the immediate conversation or from some previous occasion, and every utterance also anticipates and takes into account its own possible responses. . . . As well as the dialogic relationships between utterances, Bakhtin suggests that dialogues are set up within utterances by our taking on and reproducing other people's voices either directly through speaking their words as if they were our own, or through the use of reported speech. (Maybin 1994: 132)

In this process of borrowing, allegiances to values are tangentially or directly indicated. The network of these allegiances locate the dialogue within a speech community. The acceptable patterns of borrowing within speech communities define the speech genres. This back and forth process of borrowing within dialogues becomes all the more heightened when the dialogues take place in the specific speech communities of educational settings and involve the specific speech genres of educational projects.

CENTRIPETAL AND CENTRIFUGAL SPIN

One way that Bakhtin used to describe the borrowing processes within speech communities was through a scientific metaphor he himself borrowed from the innovations in physics of his time. Bakhtin likens dialogic exchanges to the centrifugal and centripetal forces in the composition of atoms¹³. Just as the specific characteristics of an element are created by the gravitational spin of the electrons, which make up its structure, so too are speech genres constructed from the negative (repulsion away from the centre) and positive (attraction towards it) spin of

¹² Vygotsky emphasises the potential benefit of borrowing on an inter-mental plane that then becomes internalised, instead of dwelling on the conflicts within such a process.

¹³ Strauss and Quinn (1994) take up this specific metaphor to develop their cultural/cognitive model.

people's language choices. Bakhtin saw both forces as necessary for social cohesion, but saw them as constantly in a state of dynamic flux. There are ways of using language which conform or acquiesce to established norms and thereby reconfirm their centrality, and ways of using language that subvert or challenge that norm. Within one utterance or exchange, one conveys one's stance, often as a mixture of these forces (Bakhtin 1981: 272). Not only are these concepts used within the study, but Bakhtin's example of drawing from current scientific innovation to energise sociological analysis with new metaphors is also followed¹⁴. It is vital to point out that the scientific terms Bakhtin incorporated were not the positivistic and mechanistic ones of Newtonian science, but those that began to transform this paradigm, revealing reality to be paradoxical and elusive of exact measurement. The scientific innovations looked to in this study are those which have taken Post Newtonian paradigm a step further, that of complexity. Folch-Sera believes "Bakhtin would have revelled in chaos theory" (1990: 270). It is important to distinguish this use of scientific terms from that which Kahn (1995) observes running through the discourse of both the proponents and the detractors of the modern techno-rational project, which is Newtonian, and reinforces binary oppositions.¹⁵ Extending this critique to post-development theory, Nederveen Pieterse concludes: "the problem, however, is to overcome dichotomies and not merely to change the direction of the current" (1999:73).

MONOLOGIC AND DIALOGIC SPEECH GENRES

There are many different possible speech genres created within varying contexts. Bakhtin makes the distinction between speech genres that tend towards the

¹⁴ He likened his ideas to those of Einstein, used "sub-atomic" (Bakhtin 1981: 300) as a metaphor, as well as the metaphor of refracting light (1981: 277).

¹⁵ Kahn traces the history of expressivist argumentation and its critique of instrumentalism and techno-rationalism, which indeed could be argued to be the precursor of post-structuralist and post-colonial critique. In its antagonism to science, it effectively denied itself access to powerful argumentative resources, whilst at the same time insuring the only use of scientific terms it could use, would be those it borrowed from the dominant discourse:

Even the most passionate of contemporary critics of empire is forced to use their language—a language of immense distances, cultural as well as physical, that separate rulers from 'natives'—in order to define them. . . and it was that same language in which the challenge to 'alien' rule and domination has since then had to be phrased. (1995: 35)

monologic and those which are more dialogic. Wertsch and Smolka (1993) expand Bakhtin's concept by drawing on Lotman's work on univocal and dialogic speech. These concepts have particular relevance for examining interaction between teachers and students, and the resulting culture of the classroom. What children are able to borrow is integrally bound up with what teachers offer. Teachers' use of language indicates how much centrifugal or centripetal language they will themselves use and will tolerate from their students. Bakhtin speaks of authors either having a dialogic or monologic relationship to the characters they portray. Similarly Wertsch and Smolka look at the either monologic or dialogic relations that teachers can have with their students. Recently this issue has been taken up by the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE), in a piece entitled, "Can Teachers Have Real Conversations With Students" (Powney and McPake 2001).

A wide range of educational research has paid attention to the I-R-E (Initiation, Response, Evaluation)¹⁶, or Q-A-E (Question, Answer, Evaluation) form of interchange between teacher and student (Coulthard 1987; Edwards and Mercer 1987; Gee 1994). Taking on board the kinds of concerns Bakhtin's concepts address allows one to ask deeper questions about the dynamics within this standard interchange as well as enabling one to imagine alternatives. Wertsch and Smolka (1993) highlight how two very different kinds of teacher-student interaction give rise to very different class dynamics. They characterise the standard variety as shutting down the dialogue into a monologue of centripetal force, in which teachers are expecting only an echo of their own words, not a response that engages or confronts them. In this kind of interaction, teachers' questions are always rhetorical, that is, they require students, not to elicit new or different perspectives, but to reconfirm what has already been stated by the teacher. Wertsch (1991) writes that in this interchange students are basically asked to be ventriloquists, mimicking the teacher, rather than exploring other ways to develop their voices. Wertsch and Smolka (1993) argue that teachers can engage in more dialogicality in classrooms by initiating questions that do invite a fuller response.¹⁷ They cite a transcript from a Brazilian classroom as demonstrating that such interaction can open up a forum for

¹⁶ Laterally I-R-F (Initiation, Response, Feedback); That the name for this most basic of pedagogical interchanges continues to change reflects the on-going tensions and debates about the dynamics at play within it.

¹⁷ Although Bakhtin would claim that in any interchange there is always some room to manoeuvre, some dialogical possibility, he is himself at pains to point out the ways in which this can be restricted.

children to create and explore ideas more openly, in a more dynamic and complex interaction of centripetal and centrifugal forces. When teachers allow more than an echo of their voice, that is when they encourage polyphony, or the possibility of many voices contributing to the discussion, a more exploratory kind of learning is enabled. Critical educators concerned that education for democracy not be lost within the ever increasing demand for education for a global economy (Apple 1997; Giroux 1988) stress the importance of dialogic learning. Chouliaraki (1999), in examining the larger discourses that classroom conversations can serve, refers to the dialogicality possible in classrooms in terms of questions being open or closed. Constantly throughout this study I examined every question and response for signs of how open or closed children interpreted them as being and found a wider multi-dimensional spectrum of interpretations than I expected, which demanded I refine my evaluation (open to what? closed against what? to what degree?) by considering the risk assessment they themselves continually employed.

Throughout this study children use language while conforming to established rules of a genre to subvert or reconfigure that genre from within by spinning the way they borrow discourse. To use another key Bakhtinian term, they carnivalise the story.

CARNIVAL

For Bakhtin, carnival is not just any kind of play, but play within an inverting intent that seeks to challenge bounds and norms, not seriously but with laughter. It is an un-cynical celebration of alternative realities. Essentially holistic, it crosses the borders between life and death, reality and unreality, in defiance of the limits they impose, playing with bodily images in unabashedly grotesque improvisation. Stam writes:

Carnival is more than a party or a festival; it is the oppositional culture of the oppressed, a counter-model of cultural production and desire. It offers a view of the official world as seen from below—not the mere disruption of etiquette but a symbolic, anticipatory overthrow of oppressive social structures . . . it is a demystificatory instrument for everything in the social formation which renders collectivity impossible; class hierarchy, sexual repression, patriarchy, dogmatism, and paranoia. (1989: 86)

However, he cautions, “Carnivals can constitute a symbolic rebellion *by* the weak or a festive scapegoating *of* the weak or both at the same time. We must ask who is carnivalising whom, for what reasons, by which means and in what circumstances” (1989: 95), thereby reiterating the same point that both Gee and Wertsch are making

from their disciplines. Highlighting the relevancy of Bakhtin's theory to engagement with third world cultures, Stam states the adoption of Bakhtin's carnival aesthetic "implies an alternative logic of nonexclusive opposites and permanent contradiction that transgresses the monologic true or false thinking typical of Western Enlightenment rationalism" (1989: 22). One of the key challenges of this study was to take on board the validity of such carnival transgressions and to resist the temptation to reduce them to conventional categories of "enlightenment rationalism". In this respect the study is in keeping with postcolonial projects that deconstruct the legitimacy of positioning the "Other" as inferior.

It may be asked, however, what relevance does carnival have to children? Carnival is relevant in numerous ways but the most crucial to the themes explored in this study is the relationship between play and violence that carnival enacts. Bakhtin views carnival as an important antidote to fear and as resistance to terror. This dovetails with Osborne and Brady's understanding of the importance of play in learning. They write:

In play there is a freedom to engage ideas, actions and things which otherwise can be too frightening and dangerous. Through play students become empowered in the frightening and dangerous. (2001: 513)

POLYPHONY

Within Bakhtin's concepts of both dialogue and carnival is an embedded concept, polyphony, which alludes to the possibility of both multiple meanings and multiple voices. Polyphony is not just a concept, it can be said to be for Bakhtin an ideal for which to strive. Its presence is an indication of the healthy balance and respect for difference crucial for the realisation of human potential.

In order to understand fully the polyphony in a classroom one needs to pay attention to the interchanges between students as well as the interaction between teacher and student.¹⁸ Just as Vygotsky claimed that the dialogue between people elicits thought as a dialogue inside the individual, it is important to understand the polyphony that Bakhtin speaks of as present both amongst those conversing together, as well as resonant within one particular voice.

¹⁸ Michaels (1992) and Wertsch and Smolka (1993) focus on the former; Maybin (1994) and Rampton (2001) on the latter.

To understand the importance of polyphony it is useful to consider the insights that Maurice Bloch brings to anthropology from cognitive science. Bloch believes that the recent development of a connectionist theory of mind, one of several forms of complex theory dramatically changing scientific discourse and paradigms, is "central to the concerns of anthropology and should lead anthropologists to re-examine many of the premises of their work" (1994: 276). Anthropologists' assumption that culture is language-like and inseparable from language, rests on the more widely held belief that thought is language like, a linear sequential process. This sentence-logic model of thought, however, does not account for the rapidity with which the mind is able to recognise, respond and decide. In fact, given the conduction velocities and synaptic delays and the physical limits of the brain's neural network, many everyday simple tasks are a physicum-biological impossibility, for the sentence-logic model. A connectionist brain, on the other hand, could at least hypothetically work sufficiently fast:

Connectionism is an alternative theory. It suggests that we access knowledge, either from memory or as it is conceptualised from perception of the external world, through a number of processing units which work in parallel and feed information simultaneously. It suggests, too that the information received from these multiple parallel processors is analysed simultaneously through already existing networks connecting the processors. (1994:280-281)

Bloch claims that the nested, networked nature of thought is not conveyed best by language but through experiential learning. The importance of Lave and Rogoff's work (1984) on apprenticeship and contextualised learning demonstrates the extent to which, across cultures, experts effectively become expert by either translating verbal communication into non-verbal thought or by the more direct means of applying observed non-verbal activity to one's own non-verbal activity, what Rogoff (1990) terms "appropriation".

Bloch's insights are important for this study for two reasons. Firstly, they are a warning to examine language without privileging or reifying it, to not lose sight of the context of other forms of communication and expression of thought surrounding and enabling language. Throughout this study I look at the bodily expression of narrative, the communication of story through several channels at once by a combination of voice and body, as well as the traces of this polyphony encoded into linear script. Secondly, when Bloch describes language as being linear, he is referring to academic language steeped in the Western tradition of logical thought which has long put a premium on the uni-vocality of language, reducing language to only one

possible interpretation for the sake of clarity and logic. Bloch's insights in essence are a critique of this discourse.¹⁹ With Bloch's insights in mind, perhaps the linear expectations and use of language should be re-examined. Bakhtin's polyphonic understanding of language offers this opportunity. Bakhtin urges us to interpret language as more than linear. His interpretation of language with its centrifugal and centripetal forces, its inherent dialogic enactment signalling historic and social context, mirrors the complexity of the connectionist model of thought. Gee's work also signals a shift towards a more holistic conception of thought and language. He describes the mind rather than being a "rule following" device as being a "pattern recognising" device (1999: 40).²⁰ Giving a nod to embodied knowledge, Gee also describes discourse as a kind of dance. To the extent that patterns are co-enacted, Gee, like Wertsch, also believes it is meaningful to speak of "distributed mind" (1999: 43, 81).

THE IMPLICATIONS OF BAKHTINIAN CONCEPTS FOR UNDERSTANDING NARRATIVE

Bakhtin specifically develops this concept of polyphonic language in reference to what he considered the most important literary form, the novel.²¹ He explores story's potential for polyphonic use of language, and the relationship the narrator must develop with those represented in the story, in order to realise this potential. He is not alone in understanding story as more than linear. Bruner (1986, 1990), in examining narrative thought, recognises the simultaneity of processes at work that

¹⁹ Although phonetically written language most strongly conveys a linear conception of language, scripts that incorporate characters and pictorial symbols and oral languages are mediums for conveying language as more than linear.

²⁰ This is very similar to Strauss and Quinn's (1994) schema theory, which is facilitated by a connectionist conception of mind that allows for parallel distributed processing. In particular this theory allows for a non-sequential model of mind. Language, emotion, physical elements of an experience are not necessarily stored separately, nor do they need a code to translate between them; they are all part of the same associative network (1994: 288). It is important to stress this is a dynamical interpretation rather than a mechanistic interpretation of connectionism. I use complex theory much as Strauss and Quinn draw on complexity, "as a heuristic, a way of drawing together and making sense out of otherwise scattered insights from different fields" (1994: 285).

²¹ Todorov, in his seminal work on Bakhtin argues that Bakhtin's historical literary analysis is not only relevant to the human sciences but serves as an epistemological foundation for anthropological reflection (1991:13).

make story or narrative the powerful tools they are. He identifies two processes at work within stories with a particularly non-linear term of landscape. A story simultaneously conveys an action landscape and an affective or subjective landscape. It is the intertwining of these two landscapes in one script that make stories vehicles for learning and remembering. Similarly, Tappan and Brown (1989) conceive of stories as composed of three interweaving strands, the third conveying a moral dimension, of not only what is, but also, by implication, what should be. In a similar vein, the German linguists, Mühlhäusler, (1997) draws attention to a new frame for the discipline, that of ecolinguistics, the study of language's "ecology", a metaphor which alludes to the complex relationships sketched out above.

TOWARDS A WORKING MODEL OF NARRATIVE

Given the dialogical, polyphonic understanding of language and social interaction the definition of narrative deployed in this study is closely aligned with that of Dubose-Brunner, who draws from Bakhtin to describe narrative as:

Expressed uncertainty, representation, telling of events, ordering of one's life "story", knowing or imaginative play, making sense of the fictive world and thus vicariously of the lived world, all of these and none of them capture in its entirety the sense of complexity and a range of boundless possibilities within narrative. Narratives are not fixed, neither are our readings, they grow fluctuate, shuttle back and forth recursively, the way we tend to live our lives. (Dubose-Brunner 1994: 17)²²

A metaphor that might further explicate what is meant occurred to me upon my return from fieldwork. I would like to suggest stories have a shape, or are shaped, in a process not unlike the Japanese art of shaping figures out of paper. Stories are an unfolding of events. Like origami, the shape of the story depends on both what is folded (concealed or assumed) and what is unfolded (revealed or disclosed) and in what order. In different contexts different shared expectations and understandings influence the process of folding and unfolding, so that what one leaves out and puts in, and in what order will make sense, or make a recognisable shape. Thus, linear topic centred approaches depend on and contribute to cultures with strong linear paradigms underpinning them, such as the development paradigm of Western Europe and North America.

²² Gee's fairly succinct definition of narrative is also pertinent: "narrative is the way we make deep sense of problems that bother us" (1999: 113).

In addition to this description it is important to draw attention to the distinction Brodkey's makes between story and narrative. Brodkey points to the danger in using the term story, in that it erases the context in which the story is created and the role of who creates it. Her advice is that critical narrators should draw attention to their narrating and the power dynamics that underpin their choices and always remain mindful of the same in other's narratives (Brodkey 1987: 71). This concern is entirely in keeping with Wertsch's sense that the core unit of analysis derived from Vygotsky and Bakhtin should "irreducibly" be "the person(s)-acting-with-mediational-means as the agent of action" (1991: 120). He, too, would assert it is important not to lose sight of who is speaking and how. However, there are connotations to narrative that makes its use problematic, as Wertsch implies in the argument that continues from the above quote. Narrative tends to imply a single voice relating something about the self. As with many theoretical concepts, there is a Euro-centric individualism embedded in the term. There is more than narrating at work in the shared construction of stories.

METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING NARRATIVES

As will become evident throughout the study, this complex definition of narrative is strongly knit together with a metaphorical or image-based use of language. One of the ways that stories work their way into the rest of discourse and everyday life is through their condensation into metaphor. Also important to keep in mind is the conduit that metaphor can serve between embodied knowledge and verbalised knowledge.²³ Pausing to consider this term in relation to narrative and dialogue is another important step in laying out the theoretical framework for the study.

Hughes (1988) offers a description of metaphor that draws on the same "nested" conception of thought that Bloch sets out. In an essay on imagination in education in which his primary aim is to examine the relationship between the imagination of the external world and the imagination of one's interior world, Hughes aptly describes how metaphorical thinking is at work in the relationships between stories, or, in a Bakhtinian sense, in the dialogue between stories:

²³ Sinha and De Lopez examine the ways in which embodiment underpins cognitive linguistics and conclude, "Embodied experience structures through metaphoric extension many other non-physical (e.g. psychological and social-interpersonal) domains" (2000: 21).

If the story is learned well, so that all its part can be seen at a glance, as if we looked through a window into it, then that story has become like the complicated hinterland of a single word. It has become a word. A fragment of the story serves as the 'word' by which the whole story's electrical circuit is switched into consciousness and all its light and power brought to bear. (Hughes 1988: 32-33)

When two such powerful stories come together in the referents of a metaphor:

The collision of those two words, in that phrase, cannot fail to detonate a psychic depth charge. Whether we like it or not, a huge inner working starts up. . . Many unconscious assumptions and intuitions come up into the light to declare themselves and explain themselves and reassess each other. (1988: 34)²⁴

What I draw from Hughes remarks is that metaphors and stories influence each other on different levels of scale. Proverbs, particularly in the Jamaican context, are often the form that condensed stories take, and are often essentially metaphoric. The stories associated with the terms in a metaphor resonate in that metaphor, and as that metaphor is used in another story, the stories implied within the metaphor also come to be used. Images and associations reinforce or contrast against each other. This relationship of story and metaphor is like an iterative non-linear equation, complex, unpredictable and the building blocks out of which art and myth take their powerful shapes, much as cloud-scapes or coast lines come by their signature from turbulence.

Brown (1977: 77) asserts that all knowledge is perspectival and that what is involved in thinking is a comparison of perspectives, which is the basic function of metaphor.²⁵ They are not merely decorative but drive thought, and deal precisely with this problem of relation to otherness: "metaphors are our principal instruments for integrating diverse phenomena and viewpoints without destroying their differences" (1977: 79). The process at work within metaphor on a small scale, where comparison reduces neither term to the other but resides in the dynamic resonance between them, is very much like the process that Bakhtin envisions on a larger scale in the concept of polyphony, and is crucial to his understanding of translation or interpretation, which I will return to in a moment. The activity that

²⁴ One can even turn to Ricoeur (1981: 170) who articulates the power of live metaphor, though his thinking on the dialogicality of a written text is in complete opposition to that of Bakhtin's (Ricoeur 1976: 29).

²⁵ Scheffler concurs, "the line, even in science, between serious theory and metaphor, is a thin one—if it can be drawn at all" (1991: 45).

occurs between the compared terms of a metaphor is similar to that which Gadamer and Bakhtin hold forth as possible between interlocutors in dialogue, both are changed, neither subsumed under the other but through their interaction generate perspectives previously unthinkable.

A major dimension of the study is the exploration of the powerful metaphors that encapsulate differing conceptualisations of what the educational project is about, its purposes, processes, underlying premises and philosophy. In the next chapter, where I examine more closely the educational context, these metaphors will come under closer scrutiny. However, more immediately I want to draw on this concept of metaphor to articulate how it can be part of a process of interpretation that enables cross cultural understanding, rather than perpetuating ethno-centric ones. This is no small task, (hooks (sic) 1995; West 1997). As Sardar comments, "The real power of the West is not located in its economic muscle and technological might. Rather, it resides in its power to define" (1999: 44).

INTERPRETATION'S ENABLING AND LIMITING CONDITIONS

As this study is a cross cultural comparison, the claim that interpretation is inherently ethnocentric throws itself up as a serious impediment to validity. What exactly the process of interpretation involves and what kind of criteria or validity underpins interpretation are key issues, all the more because it is not words alone, but the surrounding communication context, which are being interpreted. One of the clearest articulations of the problem of ethnocentrism comes from an unexpected quarter, from one who could be seen as a bastion of Euro-centric elitism, Gadamer²⁶. He articulates the charge in order to address it. He does so by raising questions, possible conditions, and arguments that have bearing on it. However, the dilemma is not definitively closed; it remains open. A space is reserved for the reader's own

²⁶ It is tempting to devote more space to a consideration of why Gadamer and Bakhtin are chosen and not, Habermas, Halliday or Bernstein whose works are more in the mainstream of British social science, or discourse analysis more closely derived from them (Young 1992). Let it suffice to say that in various ways their approaches are less flexible, their highly delineated systems and concepts more intricately bound to either British or European world views and constructs. Habermas himself stated that his model of discursive rationality was Eurocentric and "would rather pass" on the question of it being applied to Third World issues (quoted in Munck 1999: 204). For a critique of Habermas see Wertsch (1991: 13), for Bernstein, see Craig (1977).

contribution. Both in this method of arguing, and in the concerns that he raises, there is much that does not easily fit the mold of ethnocentricity. It is also in this respect that his approach coincides with Bakhtin's. Both Bakhtin and Gadamer are critical of Kantian categorical systemisation, which separates aesthetics from ethics, in particular, and of dualistic simplifications of systemic thought in general²⁷. This is an important point as it distinguishes their dialogic project from the dialectical one. Hegel's dialectic is precisely the totalising systemic process which they argue against. Crucial to their arguments against such a system is their understanding of the contextual or effective role that background, or history must play in interpretation and understanding. Both argue passionately for the inclusion of art in the understanding of the social world, and place at the heart of this endeavour the activity of dialogue.

Gardiner (1992: 111-114) has noted that Bakhtin sounds "uncannily" like Gadamer and itemises the following three "convergences" between the two thinkers among others are:

- —that Dialogue for Bakhtin is synonymous with Hermeneutics as Gadamer describes it, which for both is not a type or sub-variant of experience but the archetype of all possible experience.
- that disclosure of meaning is a co-creative endeavour in the dialogic encounter which is inherently open to continuing revision and re-evaluation because of the historical dimension to understanding.
- that both would agree that our exposure to a plurality of linguistic and cultural practices precludes our passive assimilation into a unitary all-encompassing language game or tradition. Although engagement with another can result in mutual change and enrichment, it is not at the expense of either's standpoint.

Emerson also reads Bakhtin in such a way as to identify another important similarity. He distinguishes him from "the post-structuralist anti-project" on the same grounds that Gadamer can be distinguished:

²⁷ Haynes notes the Neo-Kantian influences prevalent in Bakhtin's background before outlining Bakhtin's critique of Kantian "autonomous categorization" (Haynes 1995: 11). Gadamer's critique of Kant can be found in *Truth and Method* (1975:29-90).

Bakhtin never countenanced a structuralizing vision, and so its radical undoing—where system is replaced by void—would have struck him as a trivial inversion of an already thin postulate. (Emerson 1994: 294)

A contrast that needs to be drawn between the work of Gadamer and Bakhtin is that Gadamer's interest gravitates to what Bakhtin would call the centripetal forces in language, while his own are towards the centrifugal. Saying anything more categorical about either would belittle the complexity and dialogicality with which they present their own views.

In the supplement to *Truth and Method*, entitled "To What Extent Does Language Preform Thought?", Gadamer poses the question that raises the most critical challenge to the study I propose to undertake:

. . . whether, in our linguistically transmitted experience, we may not be prey to prejudices or, worse still, to necessities which have their source in the linguistic structuring of our first experience of the world, and which would force us to run with open eyes, as it were, down a path whence there was no other issue than destruction. (1975: 491)

Gadamer's question asks if we are not only bound to an ethnocentric view, but a very destructive one at that, and further asserts that we see:

with increasing clarity today—as Heidegger taught us to see—that Greek metaphysics is the beginning of modern technology. Concept formation, born of Western philosophy has held throughout a long history, that mastery is the fundamental experience of reality . . . Is our Western experience an insurmountable barrier? (1975: 494)²⁸

Is the metaphysics of domination and mastery the only one that history has effectively made us suitable to enact? Are any anthropological attempts to reach beyond the borders of this destined to be acts of rape and pillage, as has become the dominant critical metaphor for the discipline of anthropology (Crapazano 1986; Clifford 1986; Patai 1991)? Gadamer's first response to this challenge is to invite the reader into the text to dialogue with him in order to enact how the answer could be, "not necessarily so". In coming to this response he reclaims Socrates from Hegel's use, I believe, in much the same way Merleau-Ponty does (Gardiner 2000). Gadamer refers to a particular part of Greek metaphysical development, that of

Plato's conception of "the essence of thought" as "the interior dialogue of the soul with itself."²⁹

This dialogue, in doubt and objection, is a constant going beyond oneself and a return to oneself, one's own opinions and one's own points of view. If anything does characterise human thought it is this infinite dialogue with ourselves which never leads anywhere definitively and which differentiates us from that ideal of an infinite spirit to which all that exists and all truth is present in a single vision. It is in this experience of language, in our education in the midst of this interior conversation with ourselves, which is always simultaneously the anticipation of conversation with others and the introduction of others into the conversation with ourselves—that the world begins to open up and achieve order in all the domains of experience. (1975: 492)

which closely resembles Bakhtin's point that:

An idea does not live in one's isolated individual consciousness. If it remains there it degenerates and dies . . . it begins to live, it renews its verbal expression and (is able) to give birth to new ideas only when it enters into genuine dialogical relationship with other ideas, the ideas of others (Medvedev/Bakhtin 1978: xiv)

Gadamer and Bakhtin point to a specific kind of dialogue or conversation as crucial to gaining transformative insight. The bringing together of two voices in this kind of dialogue results not in a zero sum either/or deliberation, obeying the laws of Newtonian physics, but one which has a life of its own, that can generate not just a third voice, but that can unfold further and further perspectives. Bakhtin writes of the internally persuasive word that is:

. . .the word's semantic openness to us, its capacity for further creative life in the context of our ideological consciousness, its unfinishedness and the inexhaustibility of our further dialogic interaction with it. We have not learned from it all it might tell us; we can take it into new contexts, attach it to new material, put it in a new situation in order to wrest new answers from it, new insights into its meaning, and even wrest from it new words of its own (since

²⁹ Merleau Ponty distinguishes Plato's rendering of the early Socratic dialogues from his later writings. The later writings mark the beginning of a tradition in which dialogicality is superseded by the dialectic. Merleau Ponty argues for a return to the dialogical paradigm as addressing the deepest faults within a Marxism that had come to be interpreted and enacted as a totalizing system. In doing so he draws more on Marx's earlier works. Gardiner (2000) sees Merleau Ponty's revisioning of Marxist and Socratic texts as very compatible with Bakhtin's position. However, all this serves to remind one not to refer to words or ideas as if they belong to that person for all time, or authors' positions as if they were unchanging entities. Merleau Ponty, Bakhtin, Gadamer, Plato all wrote differing things in differing contexts and, as a result of these series of dialogues, changed what they thought and advocated.

another's discourse, if productive, gives birth to a new word from us in response). (1981: 346)

Bakhtin's version suggests the process is one more of struggle than Gadamer does, which again underscores their political differences. However, either version is still somewhat vague. I hope to make it clearer, by turning to other perspectives, opening the dialogue to other voices whose words might, as Bakhtin believed "throw light" on those we have so far discussed.

LIMITING AND ENABLING LANGUAGE: THE METAPHORICAL BRIDGE

Bohlman takes up the accusation of the hermeneutic circle's inherent ethnocentrism from a different standpoint. In order to deconstruct the sceptical accusation of ethnocentrism, Bohlman makes a key distinction between enabling and limiting conditions. This distinction is one he claims sceptical "strong holists" fail to make, and so trap themselves in an almost deterministically relative world. Bohlman presents a range of researchers, post modernists, empiricists, and hermeneutic (1991:114) as mistaking all interpretations as being "holistic-contextual interpretations", when there are interpretations of another scale³⁰, those being "rational-comparative interpretations" (1991:111). This second kind of interpretation, while, perhaps not enabling one to make absolutely true interpretations, can enable the inquirer to distinguish between better and worse interpretations through, "a public process subject to constant revision" (1991: 118). I take his point with some reservations. My concern is that rational interpretations are to some extent shaped by contextual ones, though not completely. I would say culture shapes what one considers rational and what one can "rationally" interpret rather than completely determining it.

Bohlman distinguishes between limiting and enabling conditions by describing in more detail one of the most basic of conditions for interpretation: language. It is this distinction that I refer to throughout the study. He demonstrates that it is not a limiting but an enabling condition, because it is open to creative transformations,

³⁰ Scale is my interpretation of his argument, and I use this word deliberately to draw a parallel between the problems and proposed solutions posed in the social sciences with those productively explored through the development of complex theory.

because it does not circle back on itself, but is capable of being used in new and different ways, to incorporate new meanings derived from new experiences, rather than always making experience conform to the linguistic structures already in place. If language were a limiting condition we would only be able to employ it to the extent that a tourist uses a phrase book, our linguistic resources confined to those phrases in the book. Instead:

Speaking a particular language is an enabling condition of communication. It is not a fixed limit on our capacity to communicate with others, since it may be expanded to incorporate new contexts and possibilities of understanding as well as novel, never heard or uttered sentences. Thus, like speaking a particular language, interpreting within a certain background is best understood as presenting a set of flexible constraints, rather than strict limits, on activities of interpretation and understanding. (1991: 123)

Although he differentiates his position from Gadamer in other respects (Bohlman 1991:115), there is a strong resonance with Gadamer's conception of language in this instance:

Language is not its elaborate conventionalism, nor the burden of pre-schematisation with which it loads us, but the generative and creative power unceasingly to make this whole fluid. (Gadamer 1975: 498)

In trying to understand how Gadamer's and Bakhtin's conception of interpretation might make my interpretations more "enabling", I am brought back to the dynamics of metaphor. What makes language enabling is the process of metaphorical thinking. It becomes, then particularly important to pay attention to metaphors and to remain mindful that just because language has the potential for enabling communication, this is not always realised.

Important to remember also is that linguistic conditions and their enabling or limiting effect must not be separated from physically embodied conditions and their enabling or limiting implications. An important relationship exists and one should test what one can say one knows against what one can feel or demonstrate one knows. Being mindful of Gardner's (1992) work on multiple intelligences requires one to remain aware there are different kind of knowing and to them are attached different kinds of imaginative powers. The implications for this study become apparent when one considers Braithwaite's perspective on embodied speech and the communal ownership of knowledge:

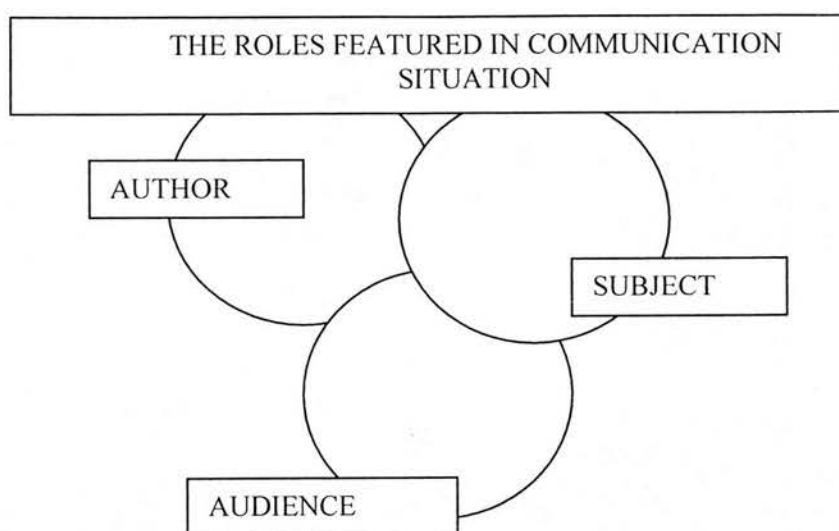
Oral tradition demands both griot and audience participation, response. Hence we have the creation of a continuum where meaning truly resides because they come from a historical experience where they had to rely on their

very breath rather than on paraphernalia like books, museums and machines. They had to depend on immanence, the power within themselves rather than technology outside themselves. (1984:18)

METAPHORS AT THE HORIZON

Serpell also addresses the issue of interpretation and the question of understanding across cultures. In drawing on Gadamer's concept of translation he helps explain it. He explores the process by which a shared interpretation is negotiated in which he offers this helpful diagram:

Figure 2.1: Three-way Communication



(Source: Serpell: 1993: 289)

The diagram above illustrates the three roles present in any interpretation situation. Sometimes these three roles will remain separate for instance when a teacher (Author) relates a story about a pupil (Subject) to a parent (Audience). At other times the roles may converge, for instance when a Pupil relates an explanation about themselves (this time as both Subject and Author) to Teacher (Audience). Serpell advocates examining accounts or communication acts from all three roles or perspectives, asking the crucial question, would the account bear up under the scrutiny of the subject? How would an account of the same event differ if either the role of subject and author or subject and audience coincide?

Serpell draws on Gadamer's hermeneutics to demonstrate how coincidence comes about. Gadamer's posits that in order for translation to take place there must be a "fusion of horizons". Gadamer supposes here that each interpretation involves a translation from one person's unique perspective to the recipient's unique perspective, these perspectives being shaped by social and physical experience. These perspectives are unique but not discrete. The commonalities in the perspectives must be discovered and tapped into in order to arrive at a successful transfer of meaning. The commonality between perspectives will be at the horizon, the differences in the foreground. When perspectives diverge, as they do the more the cultural contexts diverge, the commonality recedes further into the horizon and the more work must be done in order for one to make their way from that horizon towards the other's foreground. When such a transition can be made, when translation is successful, Gadamer calls this the "fusion of horizons". Serpell suggests that metaphors play a crucial enabling role in this work of translation.

What kind of preliminary projection is most likely to stimulate a constructive dialogue in search of a negotiated fusion of horizons? In general it seems that for such a search, sharp formulations will be less useful at the outset than figurative sketches of hypothetical commonalities. In the design of such sketches the use of analogy is essential and this requires the theorist to exploit the metaphorical dimension of human thought. (Serpell 1993: 287)

Gadamer also speaks of interpreting the part in light of the whole and of looking at both part and whole in a mutually contextualising process based on the premise of the text's internal coherence. Central to this process, again is a careful awareness of perspectives, and in some sense the ability to hold more than one perspective in one's mind at a time.

Through Serpell's interpretation of Gadamer it is possible to see more clearly what Bohlman's "public process" of distinguishing between worse and better interpretations involves. It involves consideration of interpretations between concerned actors and across mediums of knowing.

A potential schematic for this process can be derived from Berry's (1990) diagram of Pike's process of emic and etic understanding.³¹ It also serves as a framework for

³¹ Harris's use of these terms to develop a theory of cultural materialism employs slightly differing meanings with differing connotations, which has contributed to confusion about the terms. Since their introduction they have been widely used to stand in for insider and outsider, with a privileging of the outsider's point of view as being either

illustrating the distinctions between a dialectic and a dialogic approach. He applies the terms that Pike developed as a linguist to the translation or interpretation process he argues is advisable for cross-cultural psychology, Serpell being one of those he mentions as exemplifying this approach.

more scientific or objective. In point of fact, no one's point of view is ever entirely outside, and scientific points of view have their emic structures as well.

Figure 2.2 Dialogic Emics and Etics

Diagram	Berry's labels of stages & Explanatory Notes
<p>The diagram illustrates the progression of cultural understanding through several stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emic A: Represented by a single circle at the top left. Imposed Etic: An arrow points from Emic A to two separate circles on the right. Emic B: An arrow points from the 'Imposed Etic' stage to two separate circles at the bottom right. Emic A and Emic B: Two circles are shown side-by-side with a double-headed arrow between them, indicating a relationship or comparison. Dialectical Etic: Represented by two overlapping circles. Dialogic Emic with Emic Awareness: Represented by two overlapping circles, with the text 'Dialogic Emic with Emic Awareness' written below them. 	<p>1. Begin Research in Own Culture: this involves deriving an etic vocabulary to describe one's own culture's emic understandings. This can be thought of as a technical, abstract, scientific or "meta" discourse. It cannot be entirely separate or uninfluenced by one's emic understanding, but is a provisional partial objectivity</p> <p>2. Transport to Other Culture: one begins to try to make sense of the culture, using both one's emic and etic understandings from one's home culture, aware that there will be mismatches and that experiences and conversations will throw up these differences and provide one with opportunities to change both one's emic and etic understandings.</p> <p>3. Discover other culture. Although I am uncomfortable with Berry's choice of words, there is at work a process whereby participating in daily life begins to give one a very partial emic understanding as part of the culture one is visiting, which enables one to:</p> <p>4. Compare two cultures, at which point a number of interpretations is possible, which can be condensed for simplicity's sake into either:</p> <p>5-1. The two cultures do not share a common emic understanding of the issue or concept of interest, or that</p> <p>5-2 They do share commonalities without coinciding. However if one then concludes..</p> <p>6. That the commonality that one can describe in one's terms is the complete and appropriate "etic" interpretation, one subsumes both previous emic understandings in a dialectical move.</p> <p>7. If one remains aware that there is more to the concept than the derived etic description, aware of what one has yet to understand about the culture visited as well as what one cannot see of one's own shadow or blindspot from one's own culture, one retains a dialogical open relationship between the two emic understandings, a standpoint, provisional etic.</p>

(source: Berry 1990)

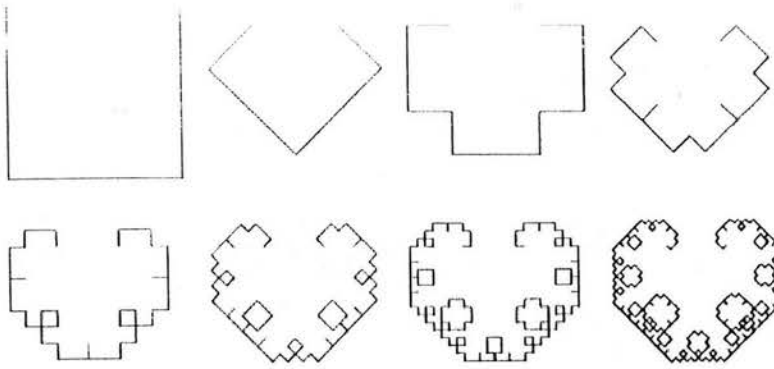
³¹ Harris' use of these terms to develop a theory of cultural materialism employs slightly differing meanings with differing connotations, which has contributed to confusion about the terms. Since their introduction they have been widely used to stand in for insider and outsider, with a privileging of the outsider's point of view as being either more scientific or objective. In point of fact, no one's point of view is ever entirely outside, and scientific points of view have their emic structures as well.

The diagram is deceptively simple. The real process is not one of interaction between discrete circles. Nor do I mean to suggest cultures can be reduced to an essentialist whole. What exactly it is that each person is an insider of is much more complex. It would be more useful to conceptualise the circles in the above diagrams as fractals. The term, invented by Mandelbrot (Glied 1988) to describe fractional dimensions, has come to refer to the spiky irregular oddly symmetrical building blocks of intricate organisation, rock formations, bronchial tubing of lungs, weather systems, and possibly applicable to classrooms. Stories are fractal; they can be endlessly changing, like a repeating decimal, and yet oddly similar, almost. Fractals are a fundamental building block of complexity science.

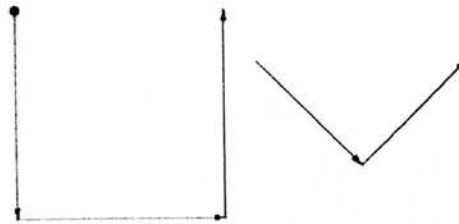
The equations that fractals represent very effectively demonstrate much about dialogic interpretation which has been discussed in the last few pages. Equations that generate fractals are non-linear, that is, they do not resolve to one discrete answer. The relationship between variables is such that in the process of solving for "y", the original term "x" is changed. Once a quantity for "y" is determined, one must resolve the equation with the altered "x". Each attempt to solve the equation is known as an iteration of the equation. The diagrams here show the first three or four iterations of non linear equations³². They also serve as visual representations for how the hermeneutic situation can be said to be more than a circle, and what perhaps Bohlman can mean by a use of language that is enabling in which interpretations are "comparative" and open to a "public process of constant revision" (1991: 118). If the dialogic exchanges where each interlocutor contributes to the other's interpretation are visualised as the iteration of a fractal equation, a visual metaphor quickly emerges for the richness involved in cultural interaction. The first diagram can be said to represent an initial encounter, or opportunity for each to understand the others' conception of the world where the differing perspectives are represented by the base curve and the motif, the two shapes interacting in the equation. As the dialogue continues the understanding of each other's position, concepts, and perspectives grows more intricate. Each exchange can be visualised as a further iteration of the fractal equation. Thus third and fourth iterations of the same fractal equations quickly come to correspond to the intricacy of real life shapes.

³² A simplified explanation of this process is to be found in Rushkoff (1996: 21).

Figure 2. 3: Eight Iterations of a Fractal Curve



A fractal curve, also called the C-curve (Gosper 1972). The base curve and motif are illustrated below.

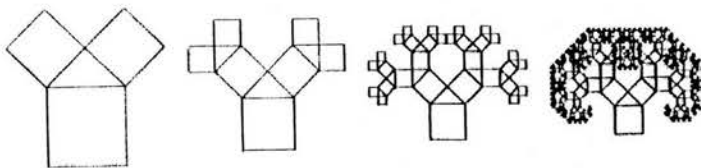


(Source: <http://mathworld.wlfram.com/C-curve.html>)

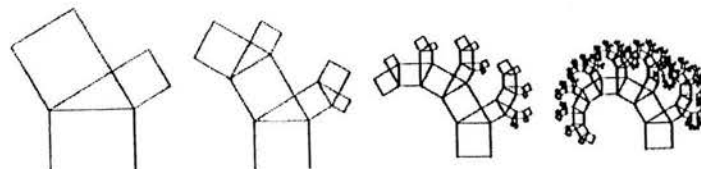
In a classroom, or any discourse setting, dialogic opportunities are not distributed evenly, but will be concentrated at points. This situation can also be depicted fractally:

Figure 2.4 Symetric and Asymmetric Fractal Iteration

A fractal with symmetric



and asymmetric



(source: <http://mathworld.wlfram.com/PythagorasTree.html>)

Fractal iterations also serve to depict the dangers of a dialectical interpretation, in which the two terms are subsumed under a superior third "master" term because they represent the intricacy masked when the two terms are "subsumed".

The difficulty of trying to follow the dialogical process of interpretation is that it requires one to try to remain aware or leave open a space for that which one cannot easily explain or understand when it would be easier to dismiss or ignore it. Again Bakhtin provides an insight that articulates why this second, more difficult process of interpretation, is nevertheless important to strive for:

The other human being whom I am contemplating, I shall always see and know something that he, from his place outside and over against me, cannot see himself; parts of his body that are inaccessible to his own (his head, his face and its expression) the world behind his back . . . are accessible to me but not to him. As we gaze at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes . . . to annihilate this difference completely, it would be necessary to merge into one, to become one and the same person. This ever-present excess of my seeing, knowing and possessing in relation to any other human being is founded in the uniqueness and irreplaceability of my place in the world. (1990: 23)

Bakhtin criticises Hegel's dialectic as bound up with a monologism that:

. . . denies that there exists outside of it another consciousness with the same rights and capable of responding on an equal footing, . . . No response capable of altering everything in the world of my consciousness is expected of this other. The monologue is accomplished and deaf to the other's response; it does not await it and does not grant it any decisive force. (1990: 318)

Here Bakhtin articulates a critique at the heart of post colonial writing.³³ One need only read Fanon's bitter account of what it is to be on the receiving end of the dialectic gaze to realise this is not an acceptable paradigm. One of the passages in which Fanon gives voice to the white gaze reads:

Lay aside your history, your research on the past, and try to put yourself into our rhythm. In a society such as ours, industrialized to the extreme, scienticized, there is no longer any place for your sensitivity. It is necessary to be strong to be allowed to live. What matters now is no longer playing the game of the world but subjugating it with integrals and atoms . . . When we are tired of our lives in our buildings, we will turn to you as we do to our children—to the innocent, the ingenuous, the spontaneous. (1967: 132)

As this consideration of theory draws to a close, it is necessary to pay particular attention to what dialogue there may be between Bakhtin and Caribbean theorists,

³³ see hooks (sic) (1995) and Dyer (1997).

and to how Bakhtin's stance might be applicable to the concerns they raise. The task is then to seek to recognise the existential position Fanon articulates. The task will be to always look for opportunities when children's words build up a sense of their own meanings, and in presenting those words, to retain and convey a sense of what they present which is non-reducible to prior understanding, paradoxes that do not submit to resolution, gazes which communicate only partial recognition. In a phrase with poignant resonance throughout the African diaspora the task is to pay attention to "the half that has not been told" (King 1999; Broedber 1992). The task is to be attuned to the rhythm and the paradox which characterise the "creole condition", a condition that Braithwaite suggests, is not a response to "rigidly defined opposites," but should be seen as "a model which allows for blood flow, fluctuations, the half-look, the look both/several ways; which allows for and contains the ambiguous, and rounds the sharp edges off the dichotomy" (1984).

Or as Littlewood has said of the process of coming to understand both African and European influences in the Caribbean, one should not look for "isolated names for foods and ritual objects or the organisation of events such as funerals". Instead the researcher must be looking and asking about something quite different:

For external observers, historian or anthropologists, the question of perceiving such a sub-dominant response as a tradition whether among the poor of Europe or the Caribbean is one of acknowledging the coherence and centrality of a self-aware, sub-dominant (or counter) tradition against an endless series of individual reactions determined ultimately from the outside. If we do so, its form will hardly be that of the dominant ideology itself, internally consistent and marked by texts which signal a lineage through time. It will be a double voiced tradition of response and of survival, of gesture and irony, of compromise and deception, ludic inversion and apocalyptic time. (1995: 248)

It is, in fact, a Caribbean theorist, Stuart Hall, who, employing the insights of the Bakhtin Circle, opened up the study of how sub-dominant groups contest dominant traditions through the medium of popular culture. Giroux's definition of popular culture borrows heavily from Hall's articulation of popular culture. For Giroux popular culture is:

. . . one sphere in a complex field of domination and subordination with multi-layered ideologies and social practices. The point is not to separate these different elements of cultural power from each other as binary oppositions but to capture the complexity of cultural relations as they are manifested in practices that both enable and disable people within sites and social forms that give meaning to the relations of popular culture. (Giroux, 1992: 184-85)

Hall's development of the "articulation" process was itself developed from Gramsci's concept of "hegemony" and, also important to note for this study, Voloshinov (1973) of the Bakhtin Circle who gave a more systematic Marxist rendering of key Bakhtinian concepts. The concepts upon which Hall draws run through the writings of Medvedev and Bakhtin as well and were at the core of the discourse of the Bakhtin Circle. To review briefly, these are that any "articulation" has to be expressed in a specific context, a specific historical moment, within a specific discourse, or in Bakhtin's terms, dialogue, and thus is connected to and conditioned by context, but not in an entirely straightforward manner. The relation between discourse and context is multiaccentual, or as Bakhtin has it, polyphonic, meaning texts or practices can be articulated with different accents by different people in different contexts for different politics (Storey 1996: 4). Even the emphasis Hall places on articulation is similar to that which Bakhtin places on utterance. Hall, I think, would agree with Bakhtin's conception of utterances containing different combinations of centrifugal and centripetal spin, but through adopting the term articulation he draws attention to differing steps or stages at which spin can occur. Hall plays on articulation's double meaning: to express and to join together. As for instance in analysing the medium of television, the messages that are conveyed acquire or divest themselves of their spin in at least two distinct moments, that of being encoded at the point of cultural production, and that of being decoded at the point of cultural reception (Miller and McHoul 1998: 17).

Given all that has been said about dialogicality, it should come as no surprise that I conceive of this study as a dialogue with the academy as well as a dialogue with participants. The contribution I seek to make is not one more brick in an imposing (monological) edifice. Nor do I believe that I am raising ideas that no one has ever raised before, but, rather, I am saying again what bears repeating in this context and asking again what is still not answered but whose partial answer now may be of some benefit.

CHAPTER THREE:

A CONSIDERATION OF CONTEXT

Literacy that obscures the power relations
inscribed in its construction ultimately disempowers.

(Crowther, Hamilton, and Tett: 2001: 3)

One of the major assumptions upon which anthropological writing rested until only yesterday, that its subjects and its audience were not only separable but morally disconnected, that the first were to be described not addressed, the second informed but not implicated, has fairly well dissolved. The world has its compartments still, but the passages between them are much more numerous and much less well secured.

(Geertz quoted in Manz 1995: 262)

INTRODUCTION

I turn now to examine the particular context of education. How the educational context is interpreted lays the groundwork for how the experiences and narratives of students, teachers and parents will be interpreted. In this chapter I will examine the key metaphors that shape differing educational conceptions. I will then show how these metaphors relate to the specific context of the communities in which fieldwork was conducted. A brief historical overview of the development of these communities culminates in a more detailed examination of the current language landscape in which and through which children interact, with particular emphasis on how technological and economic “development” are evidenced in the advertising and marketing impact upon environmental print. This overview helps place the specific educational policies that have been partially implemented and contested or resisted in these settings. I will then return to a consideration of the underlying issues of fit between educational metaphors and lived experience, before considering what new metaphors and conceptions of education are on the horizon. By the end of the chapter I will have laid out the specific challenges these contexts throw up to interpretation, and thus prepare the way for the consideration of methodology in the next chapter.

METAPHORS OF EDUCATION

Education is a much contested field with claims (DES 1989; Flude and Hammer 1990) and counter claims (Apple 1993; Bourdieu and Paseron 1977; Bowles and Gintis 1976) made about its purposes and its processes as a dynamic component of society. These dynamics and tensions, as Serpell (1993) notes, are encapsulated in foundational metaphors that stand as orientating symbols, key stones in the arguments used to muster resources and maintain parental and public compliance and support. In shaping conceptions of what education is about, these metaphors powerfully shape learner identities.

Figure 3.1 Metaphors of Education

Table A1 Alternative metaphors for schooling and their implications

	Role of student	Educational process	School curriculum	Role of teachers	Educational goals
1. (Production)	Raw material	Transformation, production	Blueprint	Technician	Perfection, utility, efficiency
2. (Growth)	Plant	Growth, cultivation	Greenhouse	Gardener	Maturity, fruition, health
3. (Travel)	Traveller	Progress, guidance	Route	Guide, companion	Arrival, enjoyment, adaptation
4. (Enlightenment)	Prisoner	Enlightenment	Escape plan	Gatekeeper, liberator	Vision, freedom
5. (Staircase)	Climber	Ascent, elevation	Staircase	Anchorman	Reaching the top
6. (Amplifying tools)	Craftsman	Equipment, empowerment	Tool-kit	Expert	Task completion, competence
7. (Struggle)	Combatant	Armament, defence	Armoury	Armourer	Triumph, survival

(taken from Serpell 1993: 292)

One can see from the table that differing processes or story lines are associated with each metaphor that draw on very different assumptions about the way the world works, who human beings are and how they inter-relate.¹ Thus they are called upon to support differing political agendas.

Both metaphors of “liberation” and “production” serve conservative or elitist conceptualisations of education. In the founding Platonic myth of education, liberation is portrayed as enlightenment. Though dialogue plays an enabling role, this is transcended in a process of detachment from the concerns of the everyday

¹ Barton (1994: 13) draws on the work of Kenneth Levine to create a similar chart of metaphors for literacy which characterise the state of non-literacy as sickness, handicap, ignorance, oppression, deprivation or deviance which depicts how responses, means and goals flow from these orientating images.

world, particularly in Hegel's re-working of this metaphor. In contrast, the metaphor of production and reproduction is required for those for whom the transcendent kind of education is not possible. As both Street (2001) and Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) caution, the overlay of complexity metaphors that characterise post-Fordist versions of production relations do not change the underlying retrenchment of power differentials. Conversely others have marshalled these same metaphors to serve very different political agendas. Education as production, particularly of tools, is also fundamental to a Marxian and, by association, Vygotskian (1978) concept of education. Interpreted in subtly, but importantly, different ways, the metaphor of education as tool is the fundamental concept of Freire's (1972) education for empowerment, thereby synthesising the two metaphors into one.

The metaphor of education as a "journey" can either be interpreted as unidirectional, up a predetermined course, as in that of a staircase or ladder, which coincides with the fundamental metaphor underlying development discourse, and with the metaphor of education as production in the image of the conveyor belt. However, the educational journey can also be conceptualised as a journey over uneven terrain, as a search that requires one to explore in more than one direction, with very different connotations and implied purposes and outcomes. As the diagram indicates, Serpell views these journey metaphors as two distinct ones. The adventure metaphor, again, is sometimes reserved for the elite, and in fact, it can be argued, played a dominant role in conceptualising the colonial project (Ceuppens, 1995).

The "growth" metaphor can be viewed as politically neutral, as one of letting nature take its course or "letting" the natural child develop to his or her full potential, as if this were something predetermined. The absences elided over in this metaphor serve to confirm the status quo as "natural". The dangers of invoking this metaphor will be explored in further detail below as they relate particularly to the Scottish context.

As with the journey metaphor, Serpell (1993) distinguishes between two kinds of liberation metaphors, the latter being one of struggle. In this version of education, liberation remains a communal enterprise thoroughly grounded rather than detached from social or political dynamics and potentially dialogic, as in Giroux's (1992) case. Freire's work is also consonant with this metaphor.

In addition it is important to point out that education can also be conceptualised as a good to be acquired, and therefore a possession.² Many would argue it is a positional good (Rawls1993), its only value being relative to others' lack of it. As Roscoe comments on the Jamaica context,

Education has been viewed traditionally as a consumption item. . . and has functioned, in part, to maintain the separation between the elite and the lower classes by providing a means of distinguishing those who were able to afford such a luxury. (Roscoe 1963: 65)

As a corollary or consequence of this metaphor, Appiah (1992) suggests yet, another metaphor for learning— for learning, and at the same time, not learning, operative in situations of disadvantage. The metaphor is one of infiltration, which Appiah alludes to when speaking of the English language as an instrument which can be turned against the oppressor. For him the English language and the education, which produces it, like any double agent, remains constantly under suspicion. This is an example of the metaphor of education both as a positional good and as an amplifying tool, but of a tool that can never be trusted.

To fully appreciate the double nature of this metaphor it is useful to quote here a Colonial Office Circular, often cited, and not without irony, in post-colonial contexts, which is the view that “the English language (is) the most important *agent* of civilisation,” (1962: 182, emphasis added). Bryan cites this quote to explain why, “it is easy to see, therefore, how English came to be regarded not even as a language, but rather, a portable commodity necessary for some measure of success in life” (2000: 4).

Each metaphor for learning also powerfully shapes what one considers the learner, often the child, to be: their characteristics and abilities, and whether their role is largely passive or active in the process. What is important to remember about these various metaphors is that they can co-exist at different levels of the educational experience, even if they have contradictory connotations, as for example the metaphors of education as liberation and production (Boot and Reynolds 1983: 10), or again as the metaphors of growth and liberation are combined in the standard middle class interpretation of Piaget (Darling 1997). Different actors or stakeholders can use a different mix of metaphors to encapsulate what they

² The dangers of viewing intellectual ability as something either one does or does not “possess” were examined earlier (Wertsch, 1991: 94).

understand education to be. Important as these metaphors are in shaping a person's view of education and their role within it, it is important to keep in mind Gumperz's (1982) point that premises deeply assumed may go unarticulated. An important question, then, is how would one's underlying metaphor for education affect one's learning strategies? If policy makers intend education to be a process of production, teachers see education as a process of travelling, and parents view education as a process of acquisition, what then is the student to make of the process? How do they effectively engage in it? Is there a mutual process to be engaged in?

What is the historical context that might underpin each community's perspective on education and therefore their choice and elaboration of the metaphors of education possible within them? There is an interactive relationship between metaphors of education and the structures and roles they suggest (Brown and Lauder 2000:231). As discussed in the theory chapter, these representations are part of a cyclical process of articulation (Hall 1980). The meaning of these metaphors are negotiated through each actor's interpretation and enactment of these metaphors, their enactment of them sometimes having more impact than their espousal of them. Noticing the paradox that can sometimes exist between teachers' espoused intentions and the structure of their discourse, Alexander comments, "(discourse) structure reveals how teachers can espouse similar values but achieve different dynamics and outcomes" (2000: 512). Important historical as well as contemporary factors influence the interpretation and implementation of metaphors of education.³ Powerful dynamics outside the school walls, themselves sometimes encapsulated in metaphors, influence the dynamics within schools. It is important to attend at least briefly to these.

COMPARISON OF GENERAL COMMUNITY HISTORIES

The three communities are all situated on islands, within sight of an ocean, which gives them all a particular kind of geographical boundedness that underlies at a

³ Ball usefully points out, "New orthodoxies of education policy are grafted into and realised within very different national and cultural contexts and are affected, inflected and deflected by them" (1998: 127).

fundamental existential level other ways of locating themselves.⁴ The two countries' related island status was driven home to me during fieldwork in Jamaica by an advertisement for international phone cards. The card depicted the Caribbean islands in close proximity to the British, so that either the Caribbean became an extended archipelago off the Cornish Coast, or the British Isles a larger version of Bermuda. Their historical inter-relatedness through the process of colonisation, and their subsequent differences in terms of cultural response to a more dominant, English culture, in broad terms define the contextual basis of comparison for the study. The context related here is of broad economic and social developments. The process whereby each specific setting was chosen is detailed in the following chapter on methodology. More detailed descriptions of the community settings are to be found in the substantive chapters that deal with each classroom.

The case has been made in Britain that compulsory state and state controlled education for all children was an imposition in response to threatening forms of worker initiated literacy, such as that which gave rise to the Workers' Education Association. Schooling as largely a process of containment and socialisation for the factory floor is the predominant metaphor through Willis' work and that of the University of Birmingham research unit of the 1970s (Connell 1983; Amit-Talai 1995). The Scottish version of education and industrialisation's interdependent development has important differences. Prior to industrialisation there were strong links between education and the Reformation, giving education liberatory connotations in the religious sense. The church was much more involved in a broad based delivery of education in Scotland than it was in England, giving rise to the formative myth of "the lad of parts" (Anderson 1983, 1999). However, during the 19th century the kind of schools that embodied this conception of education were primarily rural schools. As the dual forces of changing land use and industrialisation concentrated large numbers of the population in urban centres, the kinds of schools that developed to provide for the growing numbers of urban poor were much more like their English counterparts.

⁴ This geographical coincidence lends poignancy to the British maritime poems that Jamaican children learn (Brodber 1988). Unlike Wordsworth's "daffodils", also a prominent British educational export (Kincaid 1994) the visual images are not completely foreign, making the political subtext of such poems all the harder for Jamaican children to extricate.

Education in Jamaica, historically, was a privilege denied to the majority of the population, being slaves, by law, until the end of the 18th century and then only begrudgingly allowed. As in Scotland, the church was very involved in its development, with political as well as religious connotations of liberation deeply ingrained in its practices. Unlike Scotland, education in Jamaica is yet, to be enforced as mandatory although there are frequent calls to make it so. The implementation of such a law, given the retrograde motion of provision, would be highly problematic. These differences and similarities underlie the inherited narratives embedded within communities' attitudes towards school.

At a localised level there are further comparisons to be made in historical experience. In the vicinity of both Scottish schools where the research was conducted, the practice of indenturing coal miners included the practice of restraining recalcitrant workers in iron collars with the mine owner's crest. This practice was only outlawed in 1799. The striking similarities to slavery are apparent, and the timing of changing practice is not coincidental. The history of colonisation reveals that the category of black is fluid, having once applied to miners and the Irish, it was reconstructed along more racial lines as colonial interests necessitated. This suggests that the oft-imagined polarity between white European and black African is not as discrete as some would have it. Workers uprising in the 1930s in both countries eventually won concessions or changes in relations between the governing and governed in both countries.

The communities studied in both countries were formed as relations between the owners and workers in each context were modified. The Scottish communities have a built environment that attests to successive attempts at social engineering, such as housing schemes built to reconfigure poverty in a more acceptable form. One community was thereby eventually isolated from economic development, the other embraced within its ongoing upsurge.

The Jamaican community evolved out of developments initiated by the ex-slaves themselves. Only recently, within the last half century, have government planned amenities modified the ad hoc character of the village-scape. The inscriptions on retaining walls attest to the local political allegiances and serve as a visual reminder of the stakes embodied in Jamaica's post-independence political struggles.

Figure 3.2: Writing on the Wall



Caption: Engraved into the cement binding the retaining wall are the phrases "JLP win," and "Seaga is Boss" which refers to the Jamaican Labour Party and its leader. The more conservative of Jamaica's two party system, it was supported, most notably through the 1980's, by the Bush and Reagan administrations. Underneath, alluding to an earlier decade, is drawn a peace dove with the inscription "One Love", which alludes to Bob Marley's One Love Concert, in which, on the eve of a violent election in 1976, Bob Marley appealed to both parties to make peace, and actually succeeded in getting both party leaders up on stage to shake hands over his head.

This settlement of the uphill, less tractable land of little use for large scale agriculture, by ex-slaves, those with enough wherewithal to leave the plantation system, was an important step in what was conceived as a continuing process up and out of impoverishment⁵. The family lands marked by the tombs, which take up the most arable land on the property, are a symbolic use of land, testifying to the importance of this first step up and out of slavery (Besson 2001). Many homes display a photograph of some relative who has moved onward upward, "gone a' foreign", and serve as the distinguishing symbol of those who can claim some participation in this dominant metaphor for success.

These photographs testify to an enduring belief in the development/progress narrative. However, that narrative has lost some of its credibility and now must

⁵ As Keith and Keith (1985: 75) relate, this process was actively resisted by the Colonial Office: Lord Glenelg's dispatch to the Governors of British West Indies on the eve of emancipation informed them that in order not to aggravate the "evil" of the withdrawal of free labour from the estates "It will be necessary to prevent the occupation of any Crown lands by persons not possessing a proprietary title to them, and to fix such a price upon all Crown lands as may place them out of the reach of persons without capital." (British Government 1836, Paper Relating to the Abolition of Slavery, Part 3: Jamaica British Parliamentary Papers)

complete with other narratives in what can be argued is a post-development era.⁶ A few decades ago the schools were seen as playing a vital role in this process. Paths up and out have changed, the stories that drift back of success have changed, and with them the role that education plays. There was evidence that, just as families within the community were diversifying the paths through which they sought success, so too were teachers. They too have a network of friends and contacts in the North, be that partner schools, established relatives or NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) through which different curriculum methods, ideas and, most prominently, equipment and texts are introduced into local schools.

As this reference to trans-migratory networks suggests, Jamaica has for centuries participated in a global economy (Braithwaite 1971). Yet, one cannot make this point without bringing into question Scotland's role in that same history of transcontinental trade and its trafficking in human beings (Fry 2001). More Scots migrated to Jamaica than any other Caribbean island (Dobson 1997). Most conceptualised their stay as only transitory. More often they came as the professionals who administered or serviced the estates rather than as their owners⁷. When Jamaicans began their "Colonisation in Reverse" (Bennet 1966), it is ironic to note, that many, as well, conceived of their migration as only temporary.

The Jamaican history of industrialisation is one of relative marginalisation, though not complete marginalisation as the history of Firestone (Beckford 1982), Alcoa and Sherwin Williams variously demonstrate. Important also to remember, as Mintz (1985) has argued, is that some of the hallmarks of industrial culture that are associated with Scotland, such as the disciplinary strategies of large-scale industrial production, were actually tried out in the colonies first on sugar plantations. In contrast the Scottish setting was, as it were, right in the crucible of industrialisation, the landscape substantially re-figured by both industry's construction and its decline. The Scottish settings bear physical structural scars of these past processes.⁸

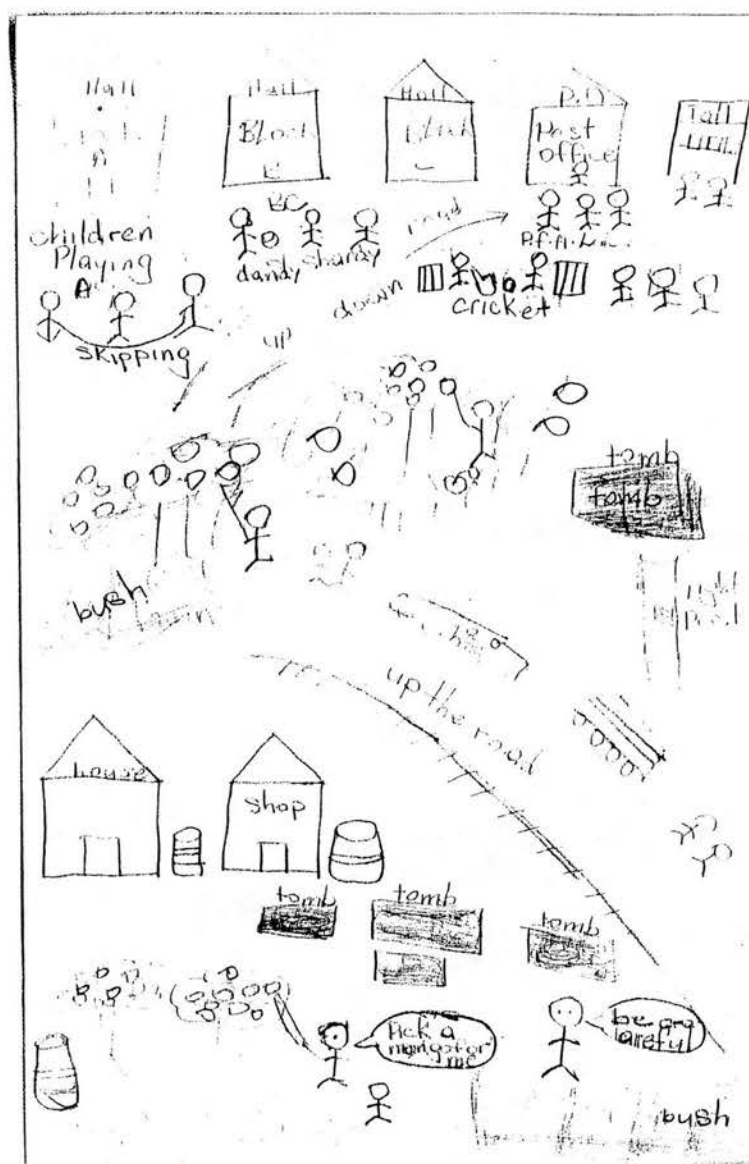
⁶ Since 1960 the gap between the richest and poorest fifth of nations has more than doubled (Martin and Schuman 1997: 29).

⁷ The Scottish legacy is felt in the particular setting where fieldwork took place. The school was originally housed in the United Church, founded by the Church of Scotland, and later moved to land, which bore the nickname Caledonia, donated by a family of the church.

⁸ As has been repeatedly pointed out, (Braithwaite 1971; Hall 2001; Karch 1985) industrialisation not only took place in urban metropolitan centres. Many historians place importance on the defining technical structures of the plantation and the sugar

its inhabitants are much more contained and framed within these structures than were those in rural Jamaica⁹.

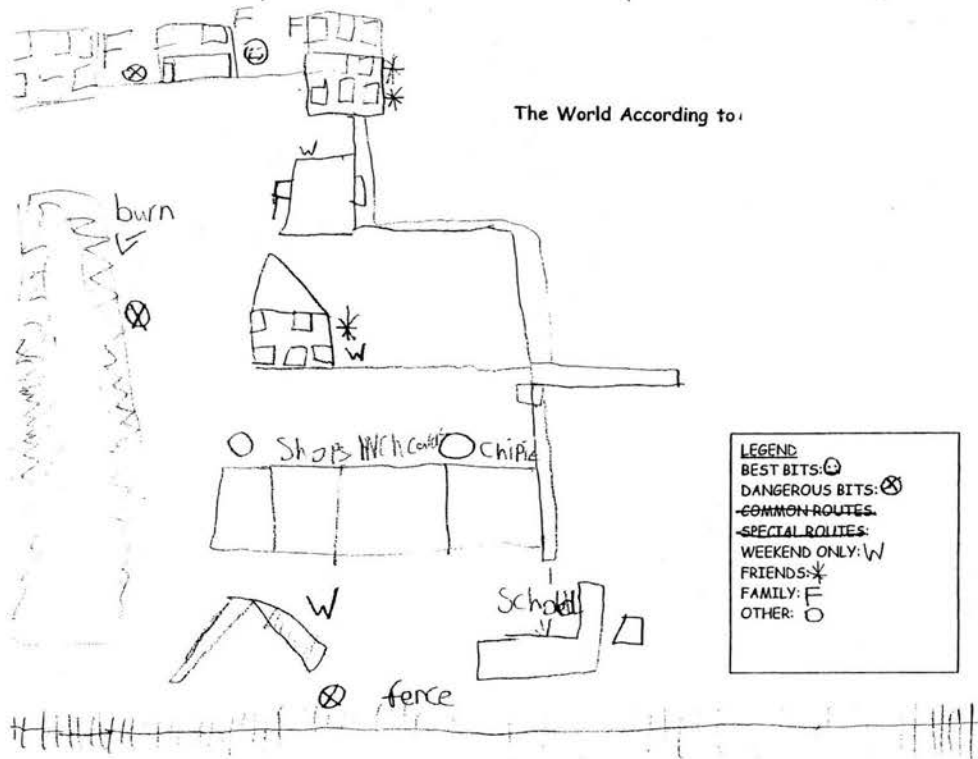
Figure 3.3: Neighbourhood Map from Child's Point of View Jamaica



mill (Hall 2001: 284). Sugar still plays a much more prominent role in Jamaican society as commodity and symbol than coal does in Scotland, though again, there are similarities to be drawn between the narratives of decline of both industries.

⁹ An important dimension of Jamaica's history of industrialisation is that of Jamaicans migrating in order to participate in industrialisation (Byron 1994), and the diaspora dynamics that continue to cycle around those migratory routes. Absences, though invisible, frame the lives in the Jamaican setting in a different sense—absence of relatives departed to industrial and now tourist centres, as well as the felt absence of amenities, infrastructure, and access to consumer goods.

Figure 3.4: Neighbourhood Map Child's Point of View Scotland



The more upwardly mobile Scottish neighbourhood now bears a new layer, the trappings of its recent transformation from a production centre to a centre of consumption, in the shape of a large shopping mall surrounded by acres of parking lot with its attendant slip roads. The school has also recast itself, changing its name from one with working class associations to that of the more affluent village on the catchment area's boundary.

In addition to these physical differences in the visual landscape, there are important differences that the same processes have worked in the soundscapes of each community. In this respect the Jamaican context is much more a centre of production and agency than the Scottish ones. As Hall (2001: 290) has noted there are important advantages of its imposed "self reliance". Jamaican assertion of agency in terms of production of culture contrasts to their relative dependency on production of material goods by others.

A CLOSER LOOK AT CONTEXT

This is a fairly broad brush description of the historical background that contributes to the contexts in which the children of this study live their lives. Issues have been highlighted rather than examined in detail. Now, I would like to focus in more detail on the culmination of the various developments touched upon above, the nexus of technological and social changes and adjustments, particularly those that relate to children's language awareness and competence. I look now at the ways in which words are used both as tools and toys, and the technology through which words are mediated, particularly forms of environmental print that significantly reconfigure the narrative resources upon which children draw. Advertising, and the complex of children-marketed media play an increasingly prominent role in their lives. With Giroux, I believe it is important to recognise:

Students inhabit a photo-centric, aural, and televised culture in which the proliferation of photographic and electronically produced images and sounds serve to actively produce knowledge and identities with particular sets of ideological and social practices. (1994: 88)

Brands are in all three places, but in very different ways.¹⁰ Brands and advertising within the sculpted landscape of shopping centres, with paved lanes designed to draw you in and at the same time surround you in this sense of convenience, ampleness, and expansive choice, convey a different message than when they exist in the form of large billboards in front of derelict factories, which they mask, positioned above the heads of pedestrians to catch the attention of motorists driving through. Jamaica has its billboards positioned for the attention of those passing through, which contrast sharply with sites where handmade signs jostle over one another, and impromptu, yet, remarkably permanent stalls on the pavement convey a sense of precarious scarcity. In the northern context structure is so entrenched, ingrained, and conveyed through a number of anonymous functions that advertising is able to capitalise on informality as release from an overdetermined world.¹¹ Yet, in the Jamaican setting, where the infrastructure is not

¹⁰ In a year when the racism of Tommy Hilfinger was highlighted, the Hilfinger logo's ubiquitous presence across the island, signifying in all sorts of situations, which the producers expressly did not intend for them, was an interesting ongoing material commentary on the contested dynamics of consumption culture.

¹¹ The pictorial narrative often drawn upon is of the Tropical Caribbean, witness current ads for Malibu.

over-determined, discourse is called upon much more to maintain structure and form relations. The degree to which infrastructure channels communication, the extent to which actors themselves must create and maintain distinctions and embody them, sets up different dynamics, and means a different importance is placed on formalities of interaction.

The excluding or empowering ability of objects, particularly objects within a larger network of marketing strategies, becomes apparent if one considers the role that toys can play in constructing a child's world. Bruner cites Barthes to this effect in a French example:

Toys here reveal the list of things that the adult does not find at all unusual: war, bureaucracy, ugliness, and Martians. . . French toys are like a Jivaro head, in which one recognises, shrunk to the size of an apple, the wrinkles and hair of an adult . . . Faced with this world of faithful and complicated objects, the child can only identify himself as owner, as user, never as creator; he does not invent the world, he uses it; there are prepared for him actions without adventure, without wonder, without joy. (Bruner, J. 1986: 130-131)

While raising an important point, this characterisation does not reflect a consideration of children's agency, nor of popular culture as a site of contested meanings (Storey 1996: 4). However, it comes chillingly close to describing children's interaction with Pokemons in the poorer Scottish community in which I worked. The focus was on acquiring the image, the most authentic version of it, and faithfully reproducing it in drawings or images. This activity was in contrast to the much more eclectic play of children in the more middle-class Scottish school, who much more readily mixed and matched images across marketed genres, embodying invented clashes between Pokemons, wrestlers and more folkloric characters like witches and monsters. They, for whatever complex of reasons, seemed much more able to escape the official version of reality presented to them, to shape shift. However, the most inventive and multi-dimensionally enacted play I witnessed was in Jamaica. There has not been as intense an investment in marketing to children in Jamaica.¹² Of necessity children create their own toys with much more scope to determine their value and importance in reference to criteria more locally negotiated than market

¹² The kind of marketing and programming on Jamaica's three television stations is in stark contrast to that available in households able to afford cable, which brings in marketing and programming targetted to the North American market.

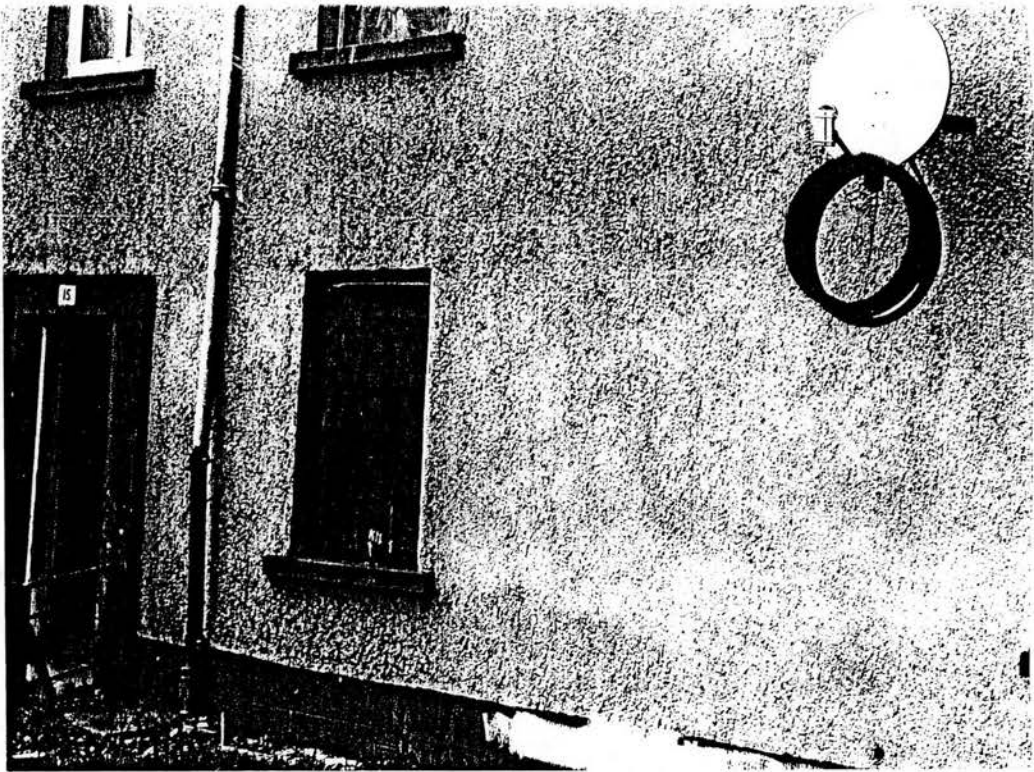
led¹³. It is not that Pokemons did not figure at all in their play, but the marketed images to which they were most responsive were not those addressed to them as the constructed members of a niche market, but those marketed to adults: action movies and Dancehall¹⁴.

Yet, the examination of this theme would not be complete without touching upon how children in all three contexts do their own branding through the medium of graffiti. The stylised script of this alternative form of literacy found its way into the back covers of jotters in all three settings. The inscribing of it on public spaces was most prominent in the working class community, as were other forms of reconfiguring the built environment to better suit their own desires and tastes.

¹³ Roscoe (1963) notes child's play as being orientated towards "stereotypical adult work activity", however, he uses this in an argument offered to explain Jamaica's lack of development as a result of stunted manipulative ability. Firstly, I would like to point out that nearly all play activity I observed referenced in some way adult activity. Secondly, I would note that his analysis of Jamaican children's play activity pre-dates the innovative explosion of Jamaican popular music (Stolzhoff 2000; Dawes 1998), which, in my observation, was the medium of children's most creative interpretations of culture, be that what could constitute a costume, a musical instrument or a lyric.

¹⁴ Dancehall is the successor to Reggae. Like Rap in America, the rapid fire dubbing of lyrics by a DJ over the top of the musical track is its distinctive sound. Also, like Rap and Hip Hop, its themes depict the dilemmas of sex (Beanie Man) and violence (Bounty Killer) graphically rather than proposing solutions or alternatives to social injustice, though Buju Banton and Capleton laterally have taken up these themes.

Figure 3.5: Satellite Basketball



Caption: Here a derelict building is reconfigured as a basketball court, satellite dish and bicycle tires as backboard and hoop

To varying degrees graffiti incorporates and reworks themes and images from advertising and media. Manning and Cullum-Swan aptly describes the interchange between public display of youth culture and media projection of popular culture:

The media influences the diffusion of rapid-fire collage, atemporal, surreal, vividly coloured and fragmented imagery, almost a visual explosion, associated with many music videos, into television news, melodrama, and advertising. The model is MTV. These sound fragments and geometric distortions of faces and figures have largely displaced films with a logical progression, a story line, and a narrative structure (beginning, middle and end, or opening crisis, resolution and closing). (1994: 259)

Yet, if we look at children's interaction with technology, particularly computers, the dynamics and consequences of empowerment or exclusion change. As Atwell concludes from a survey of American research, there is a "digital divide".¹⁵ It is not

¹⁵ Despite widely publicised international commitment to addressing the digital divide such as, the 7 July, 2000 declaration of the *Economic and Social Council of the United Nations* and the 23 July, 2000 *Okinawa Charter on Global Information Society*, the local implementation of such commitments to ensure equal access to information

a simple one. His findings reveal that children from minority and lower-economic groups actually spend more time on computers than their wealthier counterparts. However, what each group is doing at the computer monitor is qualitatively very different. In many lower socio-economic settings the computer eclipses the TV as baby sitter, engaging children in pre-programmed repetitive drill-like activities, rather than provoking problem solving or critical thinking skills of the “where would you like to go today” variety touted by Microsoft. Observations from my own research confirm this same divide. In the middle class Scottish school all classrooms have a computer with Internet access. In addition to support from department experts, the school can afford to second a teacher one day per week to work throughout the school troubleshooting and encouraging innovative use of IT in the curriculum. Students regularly use the Internet to find information and pictures relevant to current project work. Large folders full to overflowing with such downloaded information are prominently on display in the classroom. A display in the hall boasts posters that pupils developed from scanning the jacket covers of their favourite books. Children are encouraged to type poems and stories. A loose-leaf binder is kept by the computer, in which pupils record the time they use the computer and the kinds of activities that they engage in. In addition, half of the hallway, which holds the school’s library, has been converted into a computer lab with 14 new i-Mac computers.

technology were largely constrained by the more powerful market oriented policy changes that exacerbated the sink school phenomena (Cross, 2000).

Figure 3.6: Contrasting image production in two Scottish schools



Caption: These pictures illustrate the contrasting degree of technical sophistication with which children interact with popular culture. The first photo is like many public health and safety posters children were assigned to draw over the course of the year in the working class school. The second picture is of a display children in the middle class school made using the school computer to scan the cover of their favourite books which they then used graphics tools to augment into a poster.

At the working class Scottish school, such a focus on IT curricular development is simply a luxury that cannot be afforded. There is only one computer with Internet link for the entire upper primary, although there are two older models. The computer is occasionally used to type out text for displays, or letters. The children flock to the computers¹⁶. For a while there was fierce competition for a place at the one computer with Internet access. However, it was felt children were accessing

¹⁶ In an activity more stringently monitored by the class teacher than I would have intended, in which children depicted the activities they would like to do in a day, all dutifully included time at school. However, all of them also depicted that they would like to spend more time at the computer than they would at school.

inappropriate sites such as WWF (World Wrestling Federation) and Southpark, and the remedy decided upon was to disable the internet connection entirely. My observation of pupils' time at the computers confirmed, indeed, these sites were pupil's primary goal. However, their hunt and peck strategies, neither systematic nor informed by basic search engine knowledge, were often painstakingly slow and, often as not, aborted. Apart from a brief visit by departmental staff early in the year, there was no evidence of an attempt to teach the skills that would increase children's interaction with the limited IT available. For the most part, children roamed through the other educational games loaded on the hard disc, watching the antics of the graphics programmes without learning how to manipulate them.

The Jamaican settings vary widely, depending on the head teacher's ability to access resources beyond statutory provision of one kind or another. Computer classes in public schools can mean many different things from tracing the picture of a computer from the black board and naming its parts as well as copying definitions of basic computer functions, to time in air-conditioned, purpose-built labs constructing simple databases or importing images into text for a poster. If the incorporation of sound technology is any indication of Jamaica's ability to leap frog or selectively develop (Hall 2001: 291), the divide is much more variegated than might first be assumed. The community in which I worked had yet to receive full phone coverage before some households began acquiring and using, for a variety of purposes, home computers.

METAPHOR REVISIONS: CYBORGS AND COMPLEXITY

Out of this analysis of contextual considerations emerges a new metaphor, which strikes me as an increasingly apt one to vie with the other constructs of children (Jenks 1996), which is that of the Cyborg as described by Susan Leigh Star quoting Donna Haraway:

. . .that which is permanently escaping, subverting, but nevertheless in relationship with the standardized. It is not nonconformity, but heterogeneity. In the words of Donna Haraway this is the cyborg self;

The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian and completely without innocence. No longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polis based partly on a revolution of social relations in the oikos,

the household. Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other. (Haraway 1991:151)

In a sense a cyborg is the relationship between standardized technologies and local experience; that which is between categories, yet, in relationship to them. (Star 1991: 39)

To grasp this metaphor is to bring into clearer focus insights Cole and Scribner first made in the early 70's about the importance of the interplay between context and learner, that have only been reinforced by subsequent research, notably that of Lave and Rogoff (1984) and Wagner (1993)¹⁷. The degree to which educators recognise and respond to this emerging identity will determine what kinds of corresponding metaphors that education will develop to reconfigure its role.

Many of the observations made so far about context relate to Latour's ecological analysis of people-and-objects, which specifically examines the links between them, the shifts with respect to action, and the ways that duties, morality and actions are shifted between human and non-humans (Latour 1988). Prout, in reviewing the tensions between social constructionist and biological theories of childhood, recommends Latour's conception of hybrid as a more appropriate line of analysis that usefully grapples with the materiality as well as discursive components of children's identities (2000: 11). Barton suggests that literacy be examined through a similar metaphor, that of ecology, to bridge a similar problematic division between psychological and social studies of literacy (1994: 30). Star uses Latour's¹⁸ analytical framework to show that "features of the human/built environment interface can lead to exclusion (technology as barrier) or violence as well as providing an extension of human agency and empowerment" (Star 1991: 50).

This brief summary also confirms what Crossley has pointed out, namely, that the transnational processes and dynamics at work mean issues do not remain discretely packaged within the units of analysis previously assumed, most predominant among them, the nation state. Yet, as he also observes, despite the fluidity of global trends, politics remain local (Crossley 1999: 250). As will become evident in the following analysis, the "influence of increasingly dense networks of cooperation,

¹⁷ See Gee (1994) for an excellent overview of relevant research.

¹⁸ In drawing on Latour's theory it is useful to cite two pithy and implicitly metaphorical statements that reflect his stance: "Science is war by other means." "Technology is society made durable." (Latour 1991: 103).

influence and control among nations and states" (Paterson 1997: 152) is changing both the interpretive and policy landscapes of each community.

From various vantage points all these commentators on social change strengthen the argument that it is not just new metaphors, such as cyborg, that are needed in order to come to grips with changing social reality, but a new way of viewing old metaphors as well. Complexity science has substantially rewritten how we understand what we thought we knew about many common processes, biological, economical, geological and, arguably, social. Complexity does not describe new entities, but it is a new way of describing some of the most enduring and prevalent systems and relationships that make up the known world, from rock structures, to plant and animal systems, to weather systems, to stock market price indexes and perhaps classrooms. To reconsider educational metaphors in light of complexity is to substantially amend mechanistic understandings of organisations to incorporate the lessons of fractal scaling, non-linear fluid dynamics, and autopoietic dissipative structures. The lessons to be drawn from complexity science are not that of post-structural theory, which disputes all grounds for analysis, but the lesson that the grounds for analysis are limited as is our ability to predict or control. However, our capacity for and the validity of interpretation and interaction is enhanced by a complexity research stance. As Eve observes, an important implication of complexity is that the interactionists who have argued all along that society could only be understood as the outcome of a nearly infinite myriad of individual interactions and who often have eschewed statistics, were nearer the empiricist mark (1997: 279). Rather than macro-level social structures determining individual reality, small terms can make important differences to the overall shape or outcome of a system. What is crucial to understand is the relations between terms within the same level of interaction AND across levels of interaction. The more interactive the variables are, the greater likelihood that their feedback between each other can amplify or strengthen their effect, be that to throw the system into chaos, or conversely to stabilise and make it resilient to change. Non-linear fluid systems are capable of doing either (Eve 1997: 278)¹⁹. Teachers' resistance to change, the

¹⁹ Chaos and complex theory deal with understanding rather than ignoring hybridity; the focus is on relationships and transitions, turbulence being the relational state of a system in transition. Complexity reveals that turbulence, rather than being sheer randomness, contains patterns and parameters that can lend themselves to at least partial understanding. Generalisations about complexity are dangerous nevertheless the overview below is helpful:

resilience of school culture, the transformative moment when a child appears to take a quantum leap forward in learning, all of these defy mechanistic analysis, yet, they are the very sort of experiences or situations that educators must grapple with most vigorously.

As Eve also notes, much of what complexity concepts show us is what practitioners already intuit. In commenting on the complexity of choosing class teachers for different groups of children, one of the assistant head teachers at the Scottish middle class school shared some important thoughts on the complexity of teaching within the current political climate:

Mrs. Weatherton:

It's a difficult thing to call
and because it's not a science
it's really an art
the whole of teaching is an art, and
and this push by government to turn it into a science
it's not
it's not as precise as that
you cannot pin it down
it's not input equals output
there's something goes on inside the machine
and the input gets changed
subtly, and the output
is totally unexpected
in a lot of cases
so its not a scientific reaction that's going on
that happening
and it's a human dimension
is so central to the whole thing
that
it's not a factory
with a machine churning out an educated child
at the end
it's all personal relationships
and teaching is all about communication
and that's it in a nutshell.
And it's the quality of communication
that will be determined by how the teachers are feeling
in the institution

Complex adaptation is characterized not only by a high degree of interaction among component parts but also by the way that the particular nature of this interaction—the way that the system is organized—generates outcomes not linearly related to initial conditions. Whereas linear organization is generally predictable in its consequences, emergence is characterized by a nonlinear mode of organization that can generate nonobvious or surprising consequences. Thus, emergence concerns not only relationships among parts of a “whole” but also the possibility of new levels emerging over “evolutionary” time and the nonlinear relationships between qualities or properties at different levels. Complex systems are not only nonlinear but also adaptive. (Mihata 1997: 31-32)

and how the children are feeling in the institution
and the value that is put on what's going on day in day out;

....

you are dealing with people
and people are complex entities

Beth: That's one of the metaphors I am exploring
is, um, complex non-linear equations?

(Mrs. Weatherton: Yes)

which

in these small changes

small in one of the terms//

Mrs. Weatherton: the whole outcome will be changed.

What is to be drawn from this excerpt is not that Mrs. Weatherton is anti-science. She is conversant enough with it to complete the description of complexity I begin to make. Interestingly, in critiquing the production metaphor of education now on the ascendancy, she ends by alluding to a symbol with fractal qualities that gives rise to a complex fractal network, that of a tree that springs from a nutshell. In stressing the artistic side of teaching, I believe Mrs. Weatherton is really calling for a balance between science and art, between fluidity and structure, for a complexity conception of teaching.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY OVERVIEW

I turn now to examine how the dynamics at play in the wider communities that children inhabit relate to the educational context. An overview of the relationship between educational developments in both countries can be summarised in the following way:

The landmark studies (Plowden Report 1967; SED 1967) and subsequent legislation that propelled British education in the 1960s away from the models that hitherto had been exported around the world came just at a time when the mechanisms for exportation were being dismantled. The child-centred discovery revolution that emanated from teacher colleges of Britain, was felt less in marginalised areas, be they its peripheral housing estates or its former colonies.

However, the subsequent turn in the swing of the pendulum in the 1990's, back to teacher-centred pedagogy and an increased emphasis on testing and standards, has been followed much more quickly by similar policy changes in Jamaica in what can be argued is an IMF dominated neo-colonial era. Yet, the picture is not quite so simple. Jamaica has not followed Britain's lead entirely, and is taking forward

ideas, which are now out of favour in English policy circles. In 1996 Jamaican legislation revised and expanded a systematic testing of literacy development at defined key stages through primary education. This could be viewed as in keeping with the rationalising agenda of the World Bank (Psacharopoulos 1986). However, linked to this programme of testing is the SHELTER programme for remedial literacy work, which contains key child-centred concepts (see Appendix).²⁰ Considerable resources have been devoted to its implementation through in-service courses, resource officers and other additional resources to insure these concepts, like the thin edge of the wedge, actually make an impact on school practices. There may be many reasons for this departure, not least among them the growing expertise of Caribbean educators, as well as the influence of American, and African-American educators.

ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES AFFECTING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN EACH CONTEXT: EDUCATING OTHER PEOPLE'S CHILDREN

As this contrasts suggests, it is important to take a closer look at the differences as well as similarities that policy developments entail. Educational policy development has pivoted around differing issues in each context. The policies I want to examine here are both related to literacy. Issues of social context of language education arise over different but related conflicts. Pertinent to policy in both countries is an analysis Delpit (1999) offers of similar problems in America. Her analysis addresses the resistance to certain progressive models of education by educators representing communities historically disadvantaged. Her analysis uncovers a paradox that, like complex systems, requires one to look both ways at once. Citing Gumperz (1982) to explain the lack of understanding between educators from differing social or cultural backgrounds, Delpit uncovers some of the hidden assumptions contributing to this impasse²¹. She offers five key points as crucial to understanding the power dynamics involved in the culture of a classroom:

²⁰ This is not the first attempt; several small donor sponsored projects have been attempted over the years, always tied to the funding strategy of pilot projects. The concern over classroom culture in academic circles is long standing (Persuad 1976), the policy commitment by the government to address it cannot be said to be as clearly evidenced.

²¹ As Gee (2000) has pointed out, children's most fundamental learning of language is through an informal process of acquiring what they are surrounded with. This insight itself has been part of

- Issues of power are enacted in classrooms.
- There are codes or rules for participating in power; that is, there is a “culture of power”.
- The rules of the culture of power are a reflection of the rules of the culture of those who have power.
- If you are not already a participant in the culture of power, being told explicitly the rules of that culture makes acquiring power easier.
- Those with power are frequently least aware of—or at least willing to acknowledge its existence. (1999:327)

Delpit goes on to observe that “when acknowledging and expressing power, one tends toward explicitness. When de-emphasising power, there is a move toward indirect communication” (Delpit 1999: 329). Thus, a well-intended teacher, from a background of relative privilege in comparison to her students, in trying to downplay this difference, perhaps in the very attempt to create a sense of “equality” in the classroom, may often communicate indirectly expectations and concepts, which it would actually be more helpful to her students if she were to be more explicit about.

A fundamental part of the rules of cultural power are rules of speech, grammar, vocabulary and syntax, as well as discourse patterns and interactional styles. Delpit argues that educators who advocate allowing children to express themselves in the ways most familiar to them, to the exclusion of familiarising children with the forms of expression of power, do them a dis-service, and, in effect, reproduce their inequality. If one creates an artificial sense of valuing diversity that is not also present outside the classrooms, most importantly if society’s gatekeepers do not value diverse means of expression or communication such as ethnic dialects, then this valuing of diversity becomes a betrayal. As Delpit quotes one parent’s

whole language or child-centred “progressive” movement. However, in trying to turn their classrooms into opportunities to acquire informally or naturally, the argument goes, often teachers have only made their classrooms more accessible to children already familiar with these middle class practices and more bewildering and inexplicable to those for whom these practices are not familiar. It is not surprising that Delpit (1995) warns that Gee’s concept can be over-applied with damaging consequences. Gee’s recent work (in print) highlights the problems indirectness can cause.

resistance to the introduction of “dialect readers” in his child’s school, “My kids know how to be Black – you all teach them how to be successful in the white man’s world” (Delpit 1999: 330).

Delpit carefully distinguishes this point from deficit theories, which imply that change needs to happen in the homes of poor and non-White children to match the homes of those in the culture of power. She links this version of the deficit theory to cultural genocide (Delpit 1999: 331). The difficult balance of acknowledging home cultures whilst familiarising children with the culture of power requires explicit awareness of and communication about both cultures, and to a certain degree about politics in society:

I also do not believe that we should teach students to passively adopt an alternate code. They must be encouraged to understand the value of the code they already possess as well as to understand the power realities in this country. Otherwise they will be unable to work to change these realities. (Delpit 1999: 338)²²

Compounding the problem is the fact that not only can the privileged be unaware of their power, they can be unaware that they have rules, only becoming aware of them when they are breached. It is difficult to be explicit about that of which one is unaware oneself.

To varying degrees in all settings studied, the dialects and cultures of children’s homes are not those of privilege. They are, to varying degrees, distanced from the centre of power. This has meant that educational policy and educational practice have been contested and resisted. As Giroux points out:

While school cultures may take complex and heterogeneous forms, the principle that remains constant is that they are situated within a network of power relations from which they cannot escape. (Giroux: 1983: 63)

I draw on Delpit’s analysis to look at the contested educational history in Scotland and Jamaica in turn.

²² Tikly (2001) draws on a number of scholars (McCarthy 1993; Said 1994; Taylor 1993; Giroux 1997; Apple 1993, quoted in Tikly 2001) to outline an approach, which addresses the dual needs Delpit delineates here. This post colonial approach engages with the existing cannon in the curriculum in three inter-related aspects (1.) by acknowledging Black and Non European scholars within the canon. “The best that has been said” includes them. (2.) by examining the production of the cannon across discourses, analysing how certain forms of knowledge become official and (3.) by demonstrating the relationality and interconnectedness of Western and other forms of knowledge to which Western constructs are “indebted” (2001: 256-257).

EDUCATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCOTTISH CONTEXT

Schweisfurth (1999) has noted that it is characteristic of teachers to resist change and selectively adopt features of it. An assistant head teacher at one of the schools studied highlighted this tendency as particularly relevant to the Scottish context over the last twenty years. Teachers' inherent suspicion of changes emanating from south of the border meant the policy pendulum never swung quite so far in either direction. Her view, which field observations, interviews with other teachers and background reading (Clark and Munn 1997; Commission on Scottish Education 1996; Darling 1999) have corroborated, is that Scottish teachers throughout the 70s and 80s retained important structural features of traditional teaching methods, whilst incorporating them into a child-centred framework. "Balance and breadth" (Clark and Munn 1997: 38) became the key phrases to characterise the curriculum.

Now that there is a push towards a nationally standardised curriculum delivery very much re-focussed on whole class teacher centred and directed classrooms, Scottish teachers are seeking to retain key elements from the child-centred approach that they had found worthwhile, problem solving activities being key amongst them. Analysis from several quarters points out that Scotland has not experienced the same backlash against child-centred approaches as has happened in England against the Plowden Report, largely because the implementation in Scotland was always more "level-headed". Scotland has warded off the worst of the backlash on a number of negotiated fronts (Paterson 1999b). The retention of the autonomy of the classroom teacher is reflected in the fact that the curriculum revision resulted in Scotland's teachers having "guidelines" (Darling 1999: 34) rather than the mandated directives of England's National Curriculum. The curriculum has also retained a thematic rather than the discrete subject approach (Harrison 1999: 164). These historical differences meant the return to whole classroom teaching in Scotland has had a different impetus and included important social considerations, which modify, but do not entirely resolve, the underlying political tensions of these curricular changes.

The return to teacher-centred classrooms was precipitated by a key piece of research (EDC 1992), conducted in the same city as this current study. In it children from a disadvantaged area with very low language development test scores took part in an "early intervention" programme, which consisted of several components:

a return to more systemic, skill based instruction, increased staffing that reduced the child to adult ratio and increased encouragement of parents' involvement in their children's education. The results were that in a few years these children surpassed the test scores of those children in a nearby distinctly advantaged area.

As part of early contextualisation work, I interviewed the lead researcher²³ as well as one of the key teachers involved in implementing the study. As the teacher relates events, both she and a local politician who played a key role in the research being publicised, brought an understanding from their working class up-bringing to their interpretation of the study's findings. It corroborated for them their growing sense that, despite the best will in the world, child-centred practices based on middle-class assumptions and experiences and constructions of childhood were failing to address the needs of working class families. The approach, as it was implemented in Scotland, drew almost exclusively on Piaget (Darling 1999: 32) and the metaphor of education as garden, which casts the child as needing to be "free" to play in order to bring out his or her 'innate' abilities²⁴. In an era when working class' community identities had been put under threat and recast, not as valid contributors to society, but as an undesirable underclass, this romanticised notion of childhood and education far from matched realities. Schepper Hughes also comments on this myth of child-centredness, which, although widely circulated and exported, conceals the extent to which adult centredness has displaced children to the margins of post-industrial consumer society:

Images and representations of the child as economic liability and burden proliferate in the popular culture. Perhaps this is a by-product of the child's loss of productive role in post-agricultural and post-industrial society in the North. Media programmes and commercials portray children as frivolous and voracious consumers. These images contribute to parental pride in their

²³ The interview with the researcher revealed he had a very narrowly defined view of literacy and focused the claims for the success of research on test scores. He felt family literacy had little role to play in increasing language development. Although subsequent findings into research showed the success of the measures introduced was not as impressive as in the first case, and that long term retainment of higher scores was not as high as projected, he saw little need to continue to monitor the findings. (Interview Notes 28/9/99) In a survey of head teachers of schools involved in the programme, the single factor they most consistently rated as being key to the programme's success, increased staffing, was not highlighted in the publicised report and has not been the component most consistently retained as the programme has been replicated across Scotland, due, it has been suggested, to the huge cost implications.

²⁴ It is important to note the absence until much more recently of Vygotskian theory, which pays a closer attention to social considerations.

children's material possessions, which announce the affluence of the household. (1998: 10).

I would add, their absence reconfirms a family's outsider, relatively deprived status.

The premise that one should not teach the fundamentals of reading and writing until the child made the choice, which they were supposed to demonstrate by indirect means through how they played, with hindsight seemed particularly flawed. To interpret their actions as a meaningful choice when they had not even been made aware there was a choice or what the choice entailed, assumed too much. Here we can see Scottish educators uncovering the same hidden power dynamics as Delpit articulates. The relevancy of Delpit's analysis of implicit and explicit communication is clear. In this case the "other people's children" being educated were not of a different race, but, in Britain arguably as salient a difference, resulting in as marked cultural differences, that of class. The response has not been the one Delpit advocated. There has been a refocusing of attention on explicitly teaching tools and strategies, but no re-assessment of the implicit political undercurrents within language choices and little attention to explicitly validating learner's cultural diversity.

This classroom re-orientation has taken place within a wider contested educational policy landscape. Two consequences of the watershed research have been contested. The predominant consequence has been to blame working class parents and to thereby recycle the deficit characterisation (Bernstein 1970)²⁵ of working class culture. This has given rise to a growing focus on family literacy and pressure particularly on mothers to provide more education at home that is appropriately "sensitising" (Walkerdine 1989; Chazan 1992; Crozier 1998; Vincent and Warren 1998; West et al 1998; Tett 2001). However, this is not the premise with which family literacy provision has been delivered. In fact, the family literacy approach (Tett and Crowther, 1998) used in the same part of the city, in which the above cited research took place, was premised upon the argument, following Fairclough (1995), that learners should be facilitated to engage in debates about the nature and meaning of language, rather than be treated as passive victims of its 'structural properties.' This approach employs Bernstein's concept of "the heart of discourse"

²⁵ It is useful to note Bernstein's opposition to his research being used, or rather 'abused' to recycle deficit theories, and that he notes even in 1970 this tendency to recycle the theory rather than focus attention on underlying structural causes.

(1997: 75-76), which recognises the role ambiguity, creativity, and provisionality play in fostering the generative deep structures of dialogical activity and learning (Crowther, Hamilton and Tett 2001:20). Whilst this approach is widely recognised, if not always implemented, by family and community educators who operate in informal or semi-formal situations, it does not characterise discourse within formalised education.

The classroom re-orientation also dovetailed with larger policy changes arising at the same time. It is not coincidental that at this time the Scottish Office Education Department was recast as the Scottish Office Industry and Education Department. The metaphor of education as production of a competitive work force strongly reasserted itself. This initiative coincided with the implementation of market forces into the education system. Under the banner of parent choice, schools were put into the position of competing for pupils, on the basis of the school's standing in achievement tests as well as the overall reputation of the school. At the same time school funding became dependent on the number of students enrolled. This kind of competition has resulted in some schools bulging at the seams, and renting church basements to accommodate ever larger reception classes, whilst disadvantaged schools echo emptily or close for lack of numbers (Paterson 1999a: 19-20).

All of these factors heighten the pressures under which teachers must perform. Whilst parent choice²⁶ has provided a few select parents a place on the governing board, and has meant a revision of school handbooks to include a friendly invitation to parents to attend school assemblies, its competitive climate has also put teachers on the defensive, less open to criticism or examining difficult issues, more concerned about appearances, and less able to devote time towards tackling any issues in depth other than achievement. However, this rather negative reading of events taken largely from Munro (1999) needs to be balanced by Paterson's analysis of the way Scottish parents acted to thwart the government's intended use of this policy. In his version of events the government policy was "captured by civil society as a way of extending popular participation in education policy making" (1999b: 149). Specifically, parents' opposition to testing forced a government retreat and protected valued aspects of the Scottish version of child-centred education. This view is corroborated by the report of the Commission on Scottish Education (1996).

²⁶ In 1998 this was recast as parent responsibility.

The major policy movements of the last twenty years can be interpreted differently, and most certainly have been implemented and experienced differently in differing particular contexts within Scotland. Unfortunately, the contexts with more cultural, social and economic capital to draw upon have often been the ones in which the softer version of events transpired, as the following chapters will illustrate.

EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE JAMAICAN CONTEXT

Turning now to the contrasting developments in education in Jamaica, as Hall (2001) comments, the late 60s and early 70s were also a time of cultural reconception. Whether this was more to do with Bob Marley or Michael Manley, or if, indeed, the efficacy of the two can be separated from the groundswell of popular culture epitomised by Rastafari²⁷, is something many still reason about. Be that as it may, the Jamaican curriculum initiated under the Manley government of the 70s, "Foundations of Self Reliance" gave a nod towards "modern pedagogical methods"²⁸ yet, its primary concerns, as its title suggests, were oriented around a different metaphor, borrowed from Nyerere, President of Tanzania. The school was not a garden, but a place where tools and weapons were to be forged. The actual role agriculture itself might play in that struggle became itself a site of contestation, as parents resisted as strenuously as they did in Africa, any attempt they saw by the system to relegate their children to the agricultural role in development. Miller's insights, which prefigure his development of Place Theory,²⁹ are relevant here:

Education for the lower strata has always been conceived in functional terms, it has been geared to practical ends, and has been determined largely by economic considerations . . . On the other hand, the lower social strata have never participated in the educational system for the reasons advanced by the ruling sections for providing them with education. The expectations and aspirations entertained by lower sections about themselves have never

²⁷ Populist spiritual movement that traces its development back to Marcus Garvey's consciousness raising efforts (Chevannes 1995).

²⁸ The curriculum guide reads: "The teacher should aim at making language learning alive (in italics) with interest by relating the discussion and the activities as closely as possible to the life experiences concerns and interests of each group of students wherever they are across the country", which is entirely in keeping with a child-centred approach (MOE 1980a: iii).

²⁹ Briefly Miller's Place Theory takes a more complex look at the power dynamics influencing societal change and that one's place in society is simultaneously located in three important dimensions (Miller 1986).

coincided with those of the ruling section. . . The result of this tension between the social sections is that education for the lower social strata has always been dysfunctional. Roscoe (1963) commenting on this dysfunctionality pointed out that in rural Jamaica, education is a means of escape from circumstances rather than a means of improving them. (1976: 61-62)

Miller is not alone in identifying the chronic dysfunctionality of education (Roscoe 1963)³⁰, yet, these reports have not had a catalytic effect. In Miller's 1976 article, he reports a literacy rate at around 50%. In a contribution to the *Daily Gleaner* (9/2000) in response to proposed teacher cuts for 'over-staffed' schools, he reports the literacy rate remains the same.³¹

Interaction between teacher and parents is much more frequent in the rural Jamaican setting³² as there is less built infrastructure to separate them, yet, the sharp divides between class, deeply ingrained in Jamaica's history are re-enacted here. It has been noted that across less advantaged communities parents are aware of these class differences and education's mediating role in reproducing them (Lillis 1985: 14). Their awareness of this lottery dimension of education raises suspicions about anything that deviates from the standard they recognise.

Again, the lack of fit or the dissonance with lived experience may explain why the garden metaphor and the pedagogical practices premised upon it never really caught on. Gardening in Jamaica did not have connotations of a romanticised past, which one yearned to return to, but of very real and present harsh conditions. Indeed King

³⁰ Roscoe's thesis explores whether education led to economic development, as is so often asserted, particularly in that era, or whether it followed it. The data he presents from the historical Jamaican context seems to support the latter—parents invest in education following a rise in living standards, with little evidence to suggest that the investment triggers further growth. Rather growth or decline is much more significantly tied to other factors such as the world price of sugar, aluminium and now bananas (Clegg 2001).

³¹ Press coverage of a near flat-line rate of improvement on test scores features widely in news coverage and commentaries. "Ja hits language barrier", *Gleaner*, June 7, 1999 reports that for the last 5 years the CXC examining board annual report has concluded, "the greatest weakness of the candidates is their inability to maintain a consistent level of acceptable English." Other articles include, "CXC students struggle to interpret English", *Gleaner*, Oct 30, 1999, "Grade 4 students fail again" *Jamaica Observer*, July 11 2000, "Poor Grade 4 Literacy Results", *Gleaner*, July 27, 2000, "Marginal improvement in some CXC grades", *Gleaner*, Sept 2, 2000. However, it must be noted that over this same time span Scottish literacy levels have also remained constant with, however, very different connotations (Clark and Munn 1997: 44-45).

³² In more urban Jamaican settings, infrastructure does separate teacher from parent in a number of ways, the most noticeable being the guard stationed at the school gate.

(1987) documents that parents actually boycotted agricultural subjects when they were introduced into the curriculum.

Although the economic stakes are high, they stand out as the sole motivation to learn English, while much about the cultural context actually serves as a disincentive to learn English, creating stark choices for learners. The discontinuity, Braithwaite argues, has another dimension. Braithwaite, in speaking of the cultural disaster area of education, points out,

We haven't got the syllables, the syllabic intelligence to describe the hurricane which is our own experience whereas we can describe the imported experience of the snowfall. (1984: 7)

Of what real benefit is it to a child in the Caribbean to be able to describe snow? The answer returns us to a consideration of Delpit's analysis of sociological factors at work in the choice of language development curriculum. From the mid-sixties, an understanding of the underlying problems, which affect literacy attainment in a creole-standard bilingual context, have been evident (Craig 1966; Craig 1967). Craig argued that in the creole situation, where there is significant lexical or grammatical relationship between the creole and the standard, in his words, when "they are attempting to learn neither a native language nor a foreign language, but something half-way between the two", the educational problems tend to be much greater than when the two languages are more distinct. He went on to enumerate several of the problems:

- the similarities between the dialects create the illusion that the standard language is already known with the result that children fail to obtain the equivalent satisfaction and learning reinforcement of the foreign learner who knows that something new has been learned.
- children attempting to learn the standard do not see the relevance of the standard language or find any compelling reason for formally learning it.
- children may actually have a negative attitude to the standard language itself, regarding it as the language of an oppressive elite, for example or (among boys) regard it as a language for "sissies". (1978: 109-110)

In many ways this early paper included points that were to become central issues explored by sociolinguistics in the following decades (Collins 1988; Gumperz 1982; Ogbu 1994). Crucially, this article concluded with an argument very similar to

Delpit's, that students needed to be made aware of the ways in which language is a tool of power and of the "standard-language requirements of different social class roles" (1978: 110). Craig also addressed the issue of language being acquired in informal exchanges as the primary mode of learning language, and the implications for students, who, as Delpit puts it, have not had the "luxury" of this "acquiring" process. Carrington's argument that schools should address children's "language repertoire" rather than teaching "a language" (1989: 67), and Alleyne's argument (1988) that language should be seen as a process not a thing, addresses the same point.

Yet, this awareness has largely remained academic, for several reasons. As research by Bailey, Brown and Lofgren (1998: 2) points out, schools are affected by interacting factors, such that traditional instructional practices; content of textbooks; availability of instructional materials; approaches to testing; school climate and pupil background make curricular intentions of any kind difficult to implement.³³ Another difficulty is that, contrary to Craig's (1978: 107) recommendation, primary teachers still remain the least trained. Teachers trained for secondary education receive a much more thorough grounding in linguistics and language development. Pollard (2000) has indicated secondary teachers' expertise comes too late, and puts them in the difficult position of undoing ingrained attitudes and habits of failure. The practice of co-opting high school graduates into classrooms to teach in primary schools persists. Under current conditions, particularly the decline in salary and benefits for teachers, this practice will continue despite policy decisions to phase it out.

The lack of translation into committed policy or effective practice resides not just in these factors³⁴. The divide between academic awareness of language issues and popular perceptions was again evident at the 2000 conference on Language and

³³ Their findings correspond with Tikly's observation that reforms have to contend with complex obstacles: "the vested interests of local elites, a lack of resources and the hegemony of Western culture and forms of knowledge in an increasingly global world." He goes on to observe: "This hegemony and the subsequent interpretation and hybridisation of cultural forms (processes in which education systems have been so deeply implicated) have made it increasingly difficult to define what a more culturally 'relevant' curriculum might entail" (2001: 255).

³⁴ Craig (2001) is an interesting overview of the history of language teaching debates and activities over the last forty years, and relates the Caribbean situation to international research and political moments.

Education that I attended on Mona Campus of the University of West Indies. Several papers were given arguing that Jamaica's multilingual situation be recognised and that the form of language most commonly used on the island should be recognised as Jamaican. However, the government representatives addressing the forum, most notably the Education Minister himself, Burchell Whiteman, distanced themselves from this stance and counselled prudence. The politicians with parents no doubt in mind remain unconvinced that Standard Jamaican English and Patwa can complement learners' understanding of each other and contribute to a fuller awareness of language itself. Rather these languages remain symbolic of entrenched class differences and the protracted sense of competition enacted over centuries³⁵. The divide between what is known at an academic level, and what is known and practised in its schools parallels the societal divisions at large in Jamaica. Yet, there have been attempts to bridge this divide.³⁶

In conjunction with the publishing of the *Doctor Bird Readers* (1980a), a curriculum, that was a major departure from the rote drill memorisation activities of traditional teaching, was widely issued. The curriculum, developed by Craig, introduced word recognition and attack skills, and elements designed to mirror informal acquisition, such as periods of free talk in class, an eclectic mix much like that now being advocated by the Scottish assistant head teacher I interviewed. Certainly the MICO³⁷ trained teachers in the school where fieldwork took place were well versed in these different activities and prided themselves on applying them in the primary one classroom. However, in that same school, primary two and three classes quickly reverted to more traditional methods with a heavy emphasis on memorising, without much contextualisation of grammatical rules and the plethora of spelling variations in standard English. That this may be a wide-spread occurrence was

³⁵ A new curriculum, which Bryan (2000: 3) describes as, "concentrating on developing literacy with community involvement", being developed in conjunction with a DFID (Department for International Development, UK) funded community education initiative, New Horizons Project, is to replace the curriculum for Grades 1-3. It is being piloted in rural schools, but had not been implemented in the area where research was conducted.

³⁶ Bryan (2000: 7) points out, "very little is known about what actually happens in the classroom", though her work (Bryan 2001) along with Evans (2001), has begun to address this gap.

³⁷ One of the foremost teacher-training colleges in Kingston, which also serves as an important centre of research. It was at MICO that Craig developed the curriculum described above (Miller 2000).

confirmed by literacy research, which examined grade four literacy levels and their resistance to improvement. Milner pointed out, in an interview about her research (Milner 1995), that the rise in expectations between primary one and two is too steep³⁸. Those who fall behind then, perhaps due to the reversion to more traditional teaching methods, remain behind, still struggling in primary five and six with the same tasks that made little sense to them in primary two. The research highlighted that readers were able to answer questions which required one to lift out of the text an appropriate phrase, but were often unable to answer questions which asked them to process the information and extend their thoughts beyond the text, or apply it in some way. She concludes that children are not used to reading for meaning.

There has since then been the development of curriculum intended to engage learners in a more meaningful interaction with text. A changing attitude towards everyday speech was part of this approach. The *Doctor Bird Readers* (1980a) developed in the late 70s are a series of stories written by Jamaican writers that take place within or address the Jamaican context and convey a sympathy towards the grammatical structures of Patwa, though they do not go so far as to use its vocabulary. The more recent PALS (Peace and Love in Schools) curriculum was developed to address the problems of violence within school and beyond. It does, in a limited way, actually put Patwa in print. In an attempt to portray realistic situations of conflict, the characters in some of the stories speak in Patwa and those exchanges are rendered as they would be spoken. Neither of these texts present Patwa as a structured, rule abiding language, or compare its regular features with those of Standard English. The teachers in the school, whom I questioned about this, were unaware that any such comparisons could be drawn. Pollard's (1993) handbook does systematically address the grammatical, vocabulary and intonation differences, yet, it was not a resource with which teachers were familiar in any of the schools I visited. To varying degrees, all of the curricular pieces offer various kinds of bridges between the two languages. None of them, however, address the political undercurrents that moving between dialects entails, and these remain murky.

³⁸ Included in the appendix is a weekly guide of material expected to be covered in the first eight weeks of grade three from the Foundations of Self Reliance curriculum guide (MOE 1980b), it gives some indication of the steepness of grade, much steeper than either Scottish or English requirements in that era, or even now. Also I have included as an appendix Anthony Winkler's description of a school visit during his time as a teacher educator (1995). Winkler is an important Jamaican writer whose novels contain frequent social commentary.

The PALS curriculum is optional and certainly not a core subject. The *Doctor. Bird Readers*, though made widely available by the government on cheap newsprint, are considered second best by educators in contrast to research that indicates students positive response to them (Headlam 1990). Teachers in all the schools I visited rely to a much greater extent on older curriculum, often by-passing the more standardised Caribbean curriculum, to return to the series *First Aid In English*, a curriculum designed and developed in the pre-Independence era and to this day distributed from Scotland. The connotations of the title suggesting to the pupil they are in need of remedy or a quick fix to an injured state is disconcerting enough. A glance at the content page gives one an idea of the sorts of allegiances and privileged images the text constructs.

Figure 3.7: Table of Contents, Jamaican Language Textbook



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	CONTENTS
We value highly the permission to include copyright material and are happy to put on record our indebtedness for:	1. THE TALE OF A TAIL 7
<i>The Tale of a Tail</i> , to Enid Blyton.	2. LUCKY AND THE GIANTS 16
<i>A Tick-Tock Tale</i> , to Stephen Southwold.	3. <i>I LOVE TO WALK WITH MUMMY</i> , by Inez K. Sibley 28
<i>The Story of Cane Sugar</i> , adapted from "Crystals from the Sun. The Story of Sugar", by permission of the Sugar Bureau, London.	4. THE THREE MONKEYS 29
<i>The Lighthouse</i> , by Marjorie Wilson, by permission of Messrs. Basil Blackwell & Mott Ltd., Oxford.	5. A TICK-TOCK TALE 30
<i>The Stolen Child</i> , by W.B. Yeats by permission of Mr. M.B. Yeats and Macmillan & Co. Ltd.	6. <i>TO A SQUIRREL AT KYLE-NA-NO</i> , by W.B. Yeats 40
<i>Buried Treasure</i> , adapted from "The Squirrels' Hoard", by Mrs. Carey Morris, by permission of Messrs. Blackie & Son Ltd.	7. <i>IN GLEN CULLEN</i> , by John Millington Synge 40
<i>The Scarecrow</i> , by Michael Franklin, to the Poetry Society (Incorporated).	8. BURIED TREASURE 41
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(Source: McIver: 1983: 4-5)

That textbooks are a site of political contestation and uneasy compromise amongst parents, teachers, policy makers and curriculum advisors is evidenced by the school's requiring parents to buy several English textbooks representing the spectrum of language policy, ultimately leaving the parents' pocketbook to carry the burden of this unresolved dilemma. Comparing the activities within the text of *First*

Aid in English with those from the curriculum used in the Scottish context the very different assumptions about pedagogy are illustrated:

Figure 3.8: Language Lesson from Jamaican textbook:

<p>14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reader C</p> <p>promised not to worship false gods any more, and no sooner was the promise made than his six daughters came running from the river towards him.</p>  <p>The king's heart was now full of joy and he and his knights were delighted to leave this place of sorrow. When morning came, they marched gaily back to the palace and received a great welcome from the people.</p> <p>Another interesting story about Saint Andrew tells how he became the patron saint of Scotland.</p> <p>It so happened that, when Saint Andrew was put to death, his remains were buried in Greece. Some time later a monk named Regulus had a very strange dream. He dreamed that an angel came to him and said, "Regulus! Take the bones of Saint Andrew and carry them to a far country."</p> <p>"To which country?" asked Regulus.</p> <p>"I cannot tell you," replied the angel, "but make ready and sail away from this place."</p> <p>Regulus did as he was told and, with two other monks, sailed on day after day until they reached the coast of Scotland. A great storm arose and the ship was wrecked. Luckily, Regulus and his two friends</p> <p style="text-align: center;">90</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Saint Andrew of Scotland</p> <p style="text-align: right;">14</p> <p>were saved and they built a church near the place where they landed. The place is now called Saint Andrews.</p> <p>Regulus stayed in Scotland and preached to the Scots. One night, when they were preparing to fight against their enemies, it is said that a great white cross was seen in the sky. Next day they won the battle and many of them thought that Saint Andrew had helped them to victory.</p> <p>To show their thanks, the Scots walked to Saint Andrews and worshipped in the little church there. Ever since that day Saint Andrew has been the patron saint of Scotland.</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">QUESTIONS ON THE STORY</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When is Saint Andrew's Day ? 2. Why is Saint Andrew mentioned in the Bible ? 3. How is the saint described in some of the stories ? 4. On one of his journeys he reached the land of 5. What stood on top of one of the high hills ? 6. What did he find at the castle gate ? 7. What did he see and hear in the courtyard ? 8. Who had tried to kill the king's daughters ? 9. From whom had the king asked help ? 10. How had the gods saved the princesses ? 11. Although the giant was dead, why was the king still sad ? 12. What did Saint Andrew say to the king ? <p style="text-align: center;">91</p>
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(Source: McIver, 1983: 90-91)

Figure 3.9: Language Lesson from Scottish textbook:

Great explorers

During the 15th and 16th centuries there were many explorations. One of the reasons why men sailed across the seas was to trade. The Portuguese sailed to the southern tip of Africa and then on to India. They brought back silver, spices and other rich goods. They built forts along the east coast of Africa to stop ships from other countries reaching the rich lands of the East. People thought that the Earth was flat. They had found land by sailing east but they were afraid to cross the ocean and sail west in case they fell off the edge of the Earth.

Christopher Columbus did not believe that the Earth was flat. He thought it was round and that if he sailed west he would reach India on the other side.

He was right about the Earth being round but he was wrong in thinking that the first land he would reach would be India!

After five weeks without the sight of land he reached a group of islands we now call the West Indies. The first people he encountered were the peace-loving Arawaks, who thought the Spanish ships were giant birds.

Columbus had landed in America. Twenty six years later, Ferdinand Magellan found the way round the southern tip of America to the East that Columbus had been searching for.

Glossary

trade means buying and selling

COMPREHENSION

Look at the two maps and answer the questions.

- 1 Who reached the southern tip of Africa?
- 2 Who reached India?
- 3 Which ocean did Columbus cross?
- 4 Which oceans did Magellan's ships cross?

MAKING A MAP

You were able to answer the questions by looking at the maps. Maps give us a lot of information.

- 1 Imagine you are the captain of a ship. You have found an island and buried your treasure to keep it safe. Draw a map of the island. You will need to put lots of information on it.

Coastline

- Where is it safe to land your ship?
- Where are the rocky places?

Inland

- Where is there fresh water for you to drink?
- Are there mountains, forests, deep rivers?
- Are there people living on the island?
- Are they friendly or not?
- Are there wild animals?
- Where is the treasure?

- 2 Give your island a name.

Most children didn't go to school. Here is what a child, lucky enough to go to school, might have written in a diary at the time.

It was cold and dark as I walked to school with Alfred this morning. Lessons started at 6 o'clock. Far too early to be trying to learn Latin, writing and arithmetic. I rocked! Our teacher read out the Latin words and we had to chant them back. It was very boring.

Poor Alfred got beaten again because he can't remember how to do division sums. I don't see how that will help him remember. I said I would try to help him.

Copy these sentences. Fill in the missing words.

- 1 Most people could not _____ or write.
- 2 People who could not sign their name put their _____.
- 3 Lessons started at _____ o'clock in the morning.

Write a sentence to answer each question.

Why did parents work hard to pay for their children to go to school?

What were the main lessons taught in schools?

What made the lessons so boring?

(Source: Nelson 1998: 28-29, 72)

From a pedagogic standpoint the differences between the two texts are clear. The Jamaican text presents the story as true, accurate and self-contained, the learner is only to commit to memory and be able to repeat the information contained within it.

The Scottish text is premised on experiential learning. The learner is invited to experience the material and make responses based upon this imagined experience. The norms assumed in the text used in Scotland are not the norms of the Jamaican context. The text that explores Tudor Britain, highlights the differences and frames an attitude of empathy, but one with an underlying assumption of superiority at having progressed from those kinds of conditions. Yet, in Jamaica children still rise at six o'clock or earlier to attend double shift schools, and the thought of questioning the severity of punishment or its appropriateness is not something children are expected to do. Neither in the Scottish text's depiction of playful little toy boats exploring the world's oceans, nor in the Jamaican's texts review of the importance of St. Andrew, is the real lived experience of the relationship between the two places, the motives and conditions of travel and exchange remotely touched upon. Both texts do agree, however, on where the student's centre of attention should be, and which country is of central importance and significance.

COMPARISON OF ISSUES ARISING IN BOTH CONTEXTS


The tensions over the power dynamics within language learning are felt across the school day, and work their way into a number of related issues. I briefly touched on the impact of industry on Scottish educational developments; it needs to be addressed in the Jamaican context too. The industry most important to Jamaica is one also of increasing importance to the Scottish economy and that is tourism. That the one curriculum piece that incorporates Patwa is funded by the tourism industry indicates the complexity of the industry's engagement with education. Every volume contains a lesson on how to be polite to tourists.

Figure 3.10: Treat the Tourist Right


LESSON 24

TREAT THE TOURISTS RIGHT

SCENE 1



SCENE 2



Scene 1

Why does the tourist look unhappy?

Why is the tourist on the beach?

If you were the tourist how would you feel?

Scene 2

Why does the tourist look happy?

As a peacemaker I learned

(Source: Peace and Love in Schools programme)

The Tourism Board is also a chief sponsor of the cultural celebrations in autumn and spring terms, which raises important questions about what kind of events these cultural performances and contests are: What are the conditions and implications of the framework of such situations? Do these occasions serve to reify and commodify, thereby reconfirming the participants' exploited status, as critics of globalisation contend? Or are they opportunities for marginalised groups and voices to gain purchase, enabling resistance and reassertion of alternative cultural values and agency? Or are situations inevitably laden with both meanings?

The tensions between these opposing dynamics are reflected in the Ministry's current draft policy paper on culture in education (MOEC 1999). The paper states that cultural policy directives must facilitate the nurture of individual creativity and the use of culture as an agent of social transformation, which seems to advance a liberation based construct of education. Yet, the definition of culture that prefaces these goals states that:

Although (culture) is not quantifiable or tangible, it is central to the definition of the basic unit of economic development, the individual and the human spirit, and the eventual unleashing of creative energies. (MOEC 1999a)

This quote signals underlying utilitarian, technicist concerns that can never be far from the agenda of a country reliant on IMF funding. It is also interesting to note that culture became attached to the Ministry of Education in Jamaica at about the same time industry became part of the Scottish designation, particularly when one bears in mind the importance of cultural representations to the tourist industry. Just as there have been Scottish critics who have questioned the merger of industry with education, so Caribbean intellectuals are not unaware of the threat within this elision of interests. Nettleford quotes from Walcott's Nobel Prize acceptance speech about a stereotype that tourist-oriented cultural policies tend to perpetuate:

A culture based on joy is bound to be shallow. To sell itself, the Caribbean encourages the delights of mindlessness, of brilliant vacuity as a place to flee not only winter but that seriousness that comes only out of a culture with four seasons. So how can there be a people there in the true sense of the word?³⁹ (1999: 6)

Nettleford adds, "Necessity here becomes the mother of a sorry sort of prostitution."

Yet, these dynamics are not unfamiliar to Scotland. Addison (2001) characterises treatment of Scots dialect in schools as a "Tartan gesture." This gesture, made usually around the anniversary of Scotland's National Bard, is closely tied to images the tourist industry seeks to project of Scotland, much as Jamaican schools make selective use of Patwa in the form of poems by "Miss Lou" (Bennet 1966) to commemorate National Heroes Day in concert with Tourism's cultural development aims. Addison reports in confirmation of McClure (1980) that, "many classroom

³⁹ There is a reverse image, like a photographic negative, of this stereotype of those visited, and that is of those who visit, the tourist, who Jamaica Kincaid portrays as "an ugly thing" (1997: 23-25).

teachers, if they use Scots in literary terms do so in a way which is confined to the past and is unrecognisable for people living in modern urban communities" (2001: 158). This was the practice in both of the Scottish schools where fieldwork took place. Addison found that the working class Scots, with which he worked, characterised their everyday speech as "just slang", not Scots, just as many Jamaicans would characterise their speech as "patter chat", or "chattin bad".

There are other instances where similar concerns arise in all the settings. During the course of research, tensions were high over the Jamaican Ministry's move away from corporal punishment. This move was perceived as another instance of British/Northern imposition of a specific definition of children's rights that worked to disempower the community as a whole. Yet, teachers in the Scottish context struggled with similar policy regulations. These concerns are related to those about language policy for an understanding of communication dynamics must include embodied expression. As forms of physical expression are restricted, pressures on verbal communication increase, as subsequent chapters explore in some detail.

The perception of the relative underachievement of boys in both settings is also drawing increased attention. Although Miller's analysis has attracted considerable criticism⁴⁰, the role he attributes to global economic dynamics in his analysis needs to be noted. He contends that Jamaica has been confronting globalisation for longer, and as a result, has a head start at understanding and addressing the dynamics that are recurrently showing up wherever global capital makes its diversifying demands felt. The unease over shifts in gendered performance of school, (Mac an Ghaill 1994) and compared performance on exams has also become an issue in Scotland, as across Europe, and is strongly linked to youth and children's changing perceptions of identity and shifts in conceptions of and relations to the wider culture (Tinklin, Croxford, Frame and Ducklin 2000; Holden 2000).

⁴⁰ The primary critique is that Miller's "Place Theory" disempowers or even implies women are guilty of some kind of betrayal or collusion with the enemy. The gains in educational performance and employment status, in the critique are attributed to the role of international capital and the elites who manipulate it rather than women's own agency. My sense is that Miller's own interpretation of "Place Theory" is more complex, given the excerpt quoted earlier in the chapter on the agency of disadvantaged parents, some of whom, it must be assumed, are women.

CONCLUSION

In this respect all three settings occupy post-colonial or post-industrial situations, and a time of changing and contested metaphors, in which old development paradigms, be they development of the child or development of a nation's economy, make only fractured sense of reality that dissolves into surrounding contradictions to them. Within this discord, there is yet, the potential that the binary opposites encoded in master narratives may be relinquished for poly-vocal narratives, in which the other is not subsumed or erased in the violence of binary opposition (Giroux 1992: 25).

Within this project,

Comparison re-enters the very act of ethnographic specificity. It does so through a postmodern vision of seemingly improbably juxtapositions, the global collapsed into and made an integral part of parallel, related local situations, rather than being something monolithic and external to them. (Marcus 1998: 390)

This chapter has reviewed the many different factors that comprise the educational context, from children's engagement with their environment, including technological and marketed aspects of it, to the historical and economic background informing the language environment, as contested in government policies by teachers, parents and industrial stakeholders. Throughout the chapter I have problematised the predominant metaphors of production and growth as they have shown up again and again in various guises. Within the discourse of complexity a synthesis of these two metaphors has been fashioned in the service of global economics (Gee, Lankshear and Maclaren 1996). This new metaphor is framed, as the old growth metaphor was, as being politically neutral, as the inevitable flowering of synergy. As the quote from Crowther, Hamilton and Tett at the beginning of the chapter reminds us, there is the danger that in hiding its political consequences, this metaphor disempowers those faced with taking it up. In contrast to this metaphor stands that of the Cyborg (Star 1991), whose engagement with the technical world is not solely on terms dictated to it. Across the settings there are differing definitions of margin or periphery, differing forms and degrees of acceptable or recognisable agency, differing environments comprised of differing mixtures of technical and natural conditions, both enabling and limiting conditions. One of the most powerful technical tools in all three settings is language itself and the enabling, inspiring, confusing and limiting conditions generated with it.

As Giroux stated, the picture that has emerged is complex and heterogeneous. One statistic is not, and that is the majority of students in all three settings will most likely not advance to higher education or the status of success it concurs. Having raised these contextual considerations, I return to a point Serpell raises:

The reasons why so few of the ideals of the curriculum are attained by most of those who enter school must be sought at the point of interaction among a constellation of interested participants: the young person herself, the teachers and the young person's family. The significance of schooling in the life of this person will emerge from a shared interpretation, which these three parties must negotiate. (1993: 283)

I turn now to an explanation of the specific process of interpretation negotiated in schools and their surroundings on a daily basis.

CHAPTER FOUR:

A METHODOLOGY FOR A CROSS CULTURAL EXPLORATION OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING IDENTITIES AND NARRATIVES

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will outline the many methodological considerations entailed in the study. Having detailed the issues involved in a cross cultural exploration of classrooms, this chapter examines the different elements of the research: ethnographic participant observation, collaboratively structured activities, and reflective interviews. As Gee has commented, all methods imply and employ theoretical constructs. It is important then to detail how these activities (methods) are situated within flexible medium range cultural models (theories), to use Gee's descriptor (1999: 6). Combining these research methods took place across three phases of research, pre-field preparation work, the work of engagement in the field, and post fieldwork of consultative representation.

PRE-FIELD METHODS: THE METHODOLOGY OF PREPARING

Control in research design starts before data with comparing
theories and previous data.

(Hammersley 1990:29)

SOURCES OF THEORETICAL GROUNDING

A "grounded theory" approach requires one to ground theory in two contexts, the context of one's own field research, and the context of similar field research as reported in research literature. In examining existing research literature to define the

questions of research, I also examined the literature to contextualise those questions, and reflect upon what might be involved in exploring them. Grounding is a word with many connotations.¹ I need to distinguish my use of the word from Glaser's (Glaser and Strauss 1967) more objectivist use of the word. I am aware the ground is a constructed one, much like the large arched structures beneath the pavement of Edinburgh's Old Town, which I must entrust my footfalls to every day. Grounding is also used within the Rastafari community to mean reasoning out through sustained dialogue, a blending of received witness tested against current perceptions, as notably borrowed by Walter Rodney in *The Groundings with my Brothers* (1969).

As the many methodological guides are quick to point out, both ethnographic and discourse analysis are messy, data-led processes. One cannot dictate from the outset what kinds of interactions one will observe and participate in, or what kinds of responses one's questions will evoke. However, one can take into the field an awareness of how other research emerged from similar approaches and keep these in mind as likely scenarios, as possible interesting themes one might also be able to explore.

Although critical about how northern constructs map on to southern contexts, it was important to bring some of these conceptual maps along to contrast, compare, critique and possibly re-sketch. Though most of the research I had reviewed before entering the field was, like mine, done by northern researchers, importantly Serpell's and Wertsch and Smolka's had also dealt with cross-cultural issues. Wertsch and Smolka's (1993) example of a dialogically based classroom exchange comes from Brazil, in contrast with a monological exchange in a North American context. Other researchers, whilst located in the North, had explored issues of cultural difference within the northern context as experienced by ethnic minorities (Ogbu and Simons 1998; Fordham 1996; Phelan, Davidson and Cao 1992; Rampton 1995). Rampton's research was most influential. Rather than attempting to change a white establishment's meta-linguistical beliefs and attitudes, Rampton became more interested in understanding the meta-linguistical competency and awareness of

¹ Since the term was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967: 18-23), various meanings and implementations have proliferated. Certainly the relationship between quantitative and qualitative methods, which this approach first intended to bridge, has changed. The interpretation of grounded theory put forth by Burawoy (1991: 5-11) is the one invoked here.

Asian youth and what agency they used to change or negotiate linguistic boundaries themselves.

As other researchers have also observed, finding appropriate sources to contextualise work within the southern context is not easy². Early ethnographic work on the Caribbean that I accessed seemed unhelpful, written before the post-colonial³ critique had re-written the terms of engagement. It did drive home the kind of paternalistic relations of Jamaica's colonial period and their lingering hold. That lingering hold is also evidenced by the fact much of research conducted by southern researchers is within the quantitative mode (Miller 1982) perceived to most closely conform to "the gold standard" of Northern academic expectation. Once I arrived in the field, I found myself playing catch up. I did discover very pertinent research by several Caribbean researchers in linguistics, education, and cultural studies. In becoming familiar with some of this literature (Pollard 1996), I did find important theoretical approaches coincided with those I had read in preparation (Bruner 1986; Michaels 1981). However, Jamaican led educational ethnographic research is only now becoming available (Evans 2001).

LITERARY SOURCES OF GROUNDING

As was noted in the introduction, across the social sciences there has been a "turn towards narrative". This inevitably raises questions about the relationship between social science "narratives" and literary narratives. Part of preparing research involved examining this interface and how the turbulent currents stirred up by interdisciplinary movements affect my own work. Despite the encouragement of Giroux and hooks' arguments for the inclusion of literature and other "texts" to be found within popular culture, I still had questions about how to interpret it, use it, or argue its validity. These tensions prefigured the decisions I would have to make in

² Increasingly, sensitive, nuanced discourse analysis is being done in South Africa such as that of Pierce Norton (1995), Peterson (2001) and Gough and Bock (2001). A very important piece about southern education dilemmas and the relations between constructs of child, school and state is Rodgers (1995) forward to her translation of two autobiographical novels that recount the childhoods and educational journeys in Indonesia of two men from different ethnic and geographical backgrounds who both became teachers.

³ For instance, Kerr (1952).

how I represent the study, what validity or value I place on describing vs. analysing. Aware of Rose's claim that:

Borrowing from Bakhtin's theoretical observations (1981) one can observe that the novel has invaded the scientific monograph and transformed it... Bakhtin shows that the novel includes a multi-layered consciousness, radical temporal coordinates, and maximal contact with the present. These features are becoming more readily used in the narrative ethnography. The future of ethnography lies in a more sophisticated and self-conscious relationship with the novel, that is, with the possibilities of social inquiry that the novel, itself an experimental form, has opened to us. (1993:217)

I am tempted to borrow from Rose, but in steering a middle course, which does not wholly embrace the manifesto that follows the quote in this article, what of its meaning can I claim for myself? There are three specific ways in which literature and creative genres as a whole open up to the research inquiry new possibilities of relationship:

- the relationship to the reader or listener
- the relationship to reality and truth/s
- the relationship to other texts.

THE RELATIONSHIP TO THE READER OR LISTENER

Social scientists until recently have dispensed with plausibility or applicability to the reading self. In fact structuralist and functionalist theories are repugnant to one's lived experience of oneself; there is a gulf between the depiction of society as a whole within these accounts and what the individual person imagines as his or her own course within society. In contrast, the narrator must convince the reader that he or she could be that person. Authors have always had to deal with the criteria of persuasiveness, coherence, and correspondence that now are being taken up as relevant to qualitative research (Riessman 1993: 65-67).

THE RELATIONSHIP TO REALITY AND TRUTH/S

As Dewey once said,

The novelist and dramatist are more illuminating and more interesting commentators on conduct than is the formalising psychologist . . . in putting the case visibly and dramatically he reveals vital actualities. The scientific systematiser treats each act as merely another sample of some old principle,

or as a mechanical combination of elements drawn from a ready-made inventory.⁴ (quoted in Sherman and Webb 4: 1988)

Literature is a place where things that ring true can be said⁵, when they dare not be said in social science. However, one cannot be uncritical of literature, but must bring to it the same kind of respect with which one engages other representatives of the culture, the study's participants. These works represent social facts, if not social science facts. Marcus understands anthropology's relation to literature and other forms of cultural representations as follows:

(I)n full reflexive awareness of the historical connections that already link it to its subject matter, contemporary ethnography makes historically sensitive revisions of the ethnographic archive with eyes fully open to the complex ways that diverse representations become an integral part of one's fieldwork. The field of representations is by no means a mere supplement to fieldwork. Representations are social facts, and define not only the discourse of the ethnographer, but his or her literal position in relation to subjects. (Marcus 1998)

THE RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER TEXTS

Literature can thus be seen as one form among many representations. The task is to listen for the resonances across representations. Creative texts defy categorisation into binary opposition. They stand side by side in a different criteria relationship to each other. They provide a kind of triangulation with cultural forms that surface within lived experience. Some gave me words for what I had recognised. For instance, Erna Brodber's *Myal* describes tensions between the representatives of the imposed colonial structures of church and school and the local cultural coping strategies of the African slave-descended villagers. At other times engagement with

⁴ Marcus applies this point to ethnography as well:

The problem that ethnography, which is centrally interested in the creativity of social action through imagination, narrativity and performance, has usually been produced through an analytic imagination that in contrast is impoverished, and is far too restrictive especially under contemporary conditions of postmodernity . . . we know what we are talking about prematurely. (1998 : 391)

⁵ Eisner notes that:

those most skilled in the qualitative treatment of words help us understand paradoxically what words cannot express" (1998: 19), and goes on to claim that literature is a form of qualitative inquiry: "one of the most useful forms of qualitative inquiry for my purposes is found in literature: writers start with qualities and end with words. The reader starts with words and ends with qualities. (1998: 22)

literature heightened tensions and made me aware of resistance I felt to what I was perceiving.

I was listening for resonance between research literature, cultural literature, be it written, sung, or performed, and the third source of grounding, that of the unwritten literature of my own prior experience.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE AS GROUNDING

The post-modern critique of academia's constructed distance has given rise to a standard practice of stating one's position. This, however, can be little more than lip service or a nod in the politically correct direction. As Marcus comments:

the practice can easily get stuck in a sterile form of identity politics... reduced to a formulaic incantation at the beginning of ethnographic papers in which one boldly 'comes clean' (Marcus, 1998:401).

I am not sure how listing the census form categories that apply to me helps the reader better appreciate what constructs I bring to research. I am a white female of middle class college-educated parents who spent her childhood in the Midwestern United States. What conclusions the reader may draw about how I engaged in relationships, interpret interactions and examine critical themes based on this description is different than if I were to add descriptors not so readily accepted as permissible to disclose in academic texts. For instance, I am also a single parent with a son of mixed African European American descent. When dealing with development issues, I draw on the experiences of living through some of the worst years of agricultural crisis in the United States and the very real risks it posed to the family farm that I knew as home.

Though the participant role I take on within the research is a simulated one, partial in several respects, I brought to that role past participation, continued participation, in roles that are not dispensable. Research requires awareness of the influences that contribute to my perspective. There are many narratives and meta-narratives that feed into my world perception, and therefore the interpretative persuasion that I bring to the study. This is true for any researcher setting out to use an ethnographic approach in which one's ability to perceive and interpret meaningful information makes one's sensibilities one's prime research tools. The particular set of critical questions about transfer of educational paradigms from north to south, heightens these issues for a northern researcher attempting to do research across these

demarcations. What I bring to the study is a way of asking questions based on prior experience, be that the experience of growing up on a farm, several years of volunteer street work with young homeless, or the experience of confronting society's construct of race as they apply to myself and my son.

The questions I brought to the study translated not so much into straight forward questions to ask participants, but into a check list of questions for myself, was I noticing what occurs around me and what that may be saying, revealing, indicating about such and such? Rather than taking stories or field methods to the field to elicit gender/race or other identity dimensions, I went to the field aware of research that highlights those dimensions or issues, (Ogbu 1994, Fordham 1996, Davies 1993, Heath 1983, Hewitt 1986, Rampton 1995, Davis 1998) but left what became foregrounded in field work to be guided by negotiations with participants. What I brought away from the field was a mixture of what parents, children, teachers, and interested community members shared with me based on how I presented myself, the process of mutual interpretation amongst us, and, finally, what it was feasible to record, depict, and translate. The analysis that emerged was one of negotiating and defining differences through play and work, about play and work. Children's relative power within these activities was often highlighted by conflicts that arose during these activities. We did not discuss socio-economic theory; we did discuss its more relevant situated manifestation as experienced in bullying and school punishment. The terms of engagement were through popular icons, Bounty Killer not Giddens. Throughout the text I try to make at least apparent, if not transparent, moments in this process of mutual interpretation⁶.

FINDING FERTILE QUESTIONS

Finding the right question to ask is more difficult than answering it.

(Hammersley 1990:34)

Several of the works cited in the theory chapter give rise to the primary research questions:

⁶ Charmaz and Mitchell's view is that, "when fieldwork is committed and consequential the writer's voice both shows and tells. It describes the action found and the experience of finding it" (1997: 209).

- In what ways is language used as a limiting condition for these children, or as an enabling one?
- What kinds of understanding are developed?
- How do dialogical processes, or the lack there of, play a part in children's developing sense of identity?

A reading of critical theorists helps focus these broad questions within a framework of social critique. Apple (1993, 1997) depicts education as a reproductive tool of a hegemonic capitalist state of inequality, which reinforces positions of relative failure for the majority of those it enculturates. Brodkey notes that, in the course of privileging those ways of knowing and telling (the ideologies) that serve dominant interests such as capitalism, schools ignore other ways of knowing and telling that might speak more directly or fruitfully to the interests of non-dominant groups (1987: 70). Critics such as Giroux (1994, 1998) articulate the possibility of counter-narratives that subvert or contest this more predominant process, in large part by finding ways of reinserting those silenced ways of knowing and telling. The questions then become: How can these possibilities, articulated at a theoretical level, actually be explored on a practical level? How early and through what scenarios do children become aware of this institutional "narrative" and the possible "counter-narratives" and in what terms? How is this reflected in the strategies with which they respond? How do racial or cultural differences alter the interpretive resources of which children make use?⁷ Given these questions, how does one go about exploring them? The approach chosen is similar to that described by Rampton:

⁷ A more complete list has been developed by Ogbu and his research companions which I remained aware of throughout research and drew on as seemed appropriate to the kinds of issues children themselves expressed: How well do students think they are doing by comparison with others? How do they think they can get ahead or "make it"? How do they think they can survive or find alternative means to school? Who are the people one would like to be like and what role did education play in making them what they are? What means of collective action are there, what does this require? What incidents of trust or mistrust or conflicts are there? What role does the school play in subordinating or control the group with which they identify? What cultural and language differences are seen as barriers to be overcome at school, or serve as markers of collective identity to be maintained at school? Does school curriculum, behaviours and language pose a threat to minority cultural and language identity? What are the group's beliefs about group members who behave and talk the school ways? (Ogbu and Simon 1998: 160, 163)

... is associated most closely with John Gumperz. It is better described as a perspective than as a tightly defined school, and it has a relatively broad methodological base. In IS, the focus falls on all of the parties involved in face-to-face interactions in which there are significant differences in participants cultural resources and/or institutional power. IS generally seeks as rich a data set on interaction as it can get, and typically data-collection involves the audio- or video-recording of good samples of situated interaction from particular events, people and groups supplemented by as much participant observation and retrospective commentary from local participants as possible. Analysis moves across a wide range of levels of organisation, from the phonetic to the institutional and these are drawn together and given coherence in the theoretical emphasis given to contextualization and inferencing as action on-line processes... Interactional Sociolinguistics looks at social processes through the worm's eye, not the bird's. IS is well equipped to attend to the perspectives of participants who are compelled by their subordinate positions to express their commitments in ways that are indirect, off-record and relatively opaque to those in positions of dominance. (2001: 83-107)⁸

It was only after returning from fieldwork that I came across Rampton's description. In reading it I recognised that it encapsulated quite succinctly what I hoped I had been about while in the field. This is not surprising as my study seeks to address similar issues to those Rampton did in his study (1995).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Taking these sources into consideration culminated in the following research design. I adopted this approach for the doctoral research with a view to developing them over a career, laying the groundwork for further longitudinal study and relationships.

⁸ See also Gumperz (1982: 45-66) and Woods (1996: 48-49).

Figure 4.1: Research Design

	Research tasks	Research questions	Narrative Questions
Participant observation	PHASE ONE: 8-12 wks. Observer-Participant: become familiar with students through in-class and out of class observation, possibly including community education setting. Engage in low-level task. Develop with professionals and parents goals and roles for research	What are the indigenous terms students use to describe and explore issues of importance to them? What are the shifts in language use in the different settings? What factors do these shifts seem to be linked to? Is there a speech genre here? Is there a zone of proximal learning?	
Collaboratively structured activities	PHASE TWO: 6-9 wks Participant-Observer: using curriculum designed to engage students in stories, develop an exchange of stories and discourse as a means to explore themes of identity and learning, in school or community education setting. Negotiate access to student assignments and records, other indicators available about context. Begin interviewing other agents/observers in education setting as a means of triangulating findings developed with students.	Does curriculum effectively bring indigenous terms into group conversation for examination? Is there evidence that students use social context of group to re-work meanings and ideas? What kinds of stories do students offer as examples and counter-examples? What are the rules and norms that constrain/ structure exchange and exploration? How does these relate to observations made by adults in the wider learning context? Is the speech genre here different, identifiable at all?	
Reflective interviews	PHASE THREE: 2-3 wks Group and individual interviews to analyze curriculum process, continued observation. Use metaphors and symbols in stories to process with students their meanings. Interview teachers and parents, using stories as focal point, possibly with students as co-interviewers	What meta-awareness do students have of the process? Do exchanges which I pinpoint as indicating shared development of meaning, strike students as having the same import? What other accounts would they offer about the process? What are they getting out of it, what do they want to do with it, how do they relate it back to their continued learning tasks and context?	
Consultative Representation	PHASE FOUR: 2-3 weeks Review process with students, staff, parents, give opportunity for critical reflection on findings. Clarify continued tasks and follow through of each participant	Does the analysis I propose stand up to scrutiny of others? Is it trustworthy? Are there continued developments of processes identified earlier, or counter-trends? How do I negotiate separation from field, whilst encouraging follow-through individually on interests developed through study?	

The research design extended flexibly⁹ in both directions beyond the phases listed here, to include the study and life experience that preceded the research, and the analysis and presentation of my conclusions that overlapped and followed on from the field experience. The role of the participants and the potential effect upon them was taken into consideration at every stage of the study (Johnson 1996). The ethos of teamwork, established in the field, was carried over into the final stages of the study, drawing upon the insights of colleagues as well as participants (Rylko-Bauer and Van Willigan 1993: 140).

Alongside the questions within the research design table are another set of questions asked at every stage of the research project to do with narrative. These questions apply to every story within the study whoever is doing the telling, including the stories that I construct:

- Where does the teller position himself or herself?
- What type of character are they: hero, (tragic, comic, and comic-strip varieties), victim, accomplice, man in the crowd? trickster?
- How are different characters described and related to each other?
- What defines a hero or heroine, a victim, a villain/villainess, a trickster, to use general terms?
- How do different tellers' terms correlate with established typography, discussed in the research literature and referred to by teachers in their practice?¹⁰
- What resources are depicted in narrative accounts?
- What strategies are deployed by which characters – to what effect?
- What structures are present within the narratives?
- Do the narratives bear resemblance to TV shows, video games, children's literature, oral narratives, other forms of media expression?

⁹ Part of adopting a grounded theory approach necessitates being willing to incorporate appropriate techniques in order to follow up possible insights as they arise from observation (Ely et al 1991: 132; Hammersley 1990: 174-76; Pidgeon 1996: 79), and as De Vries argues (1992: 47-48) includes a process of dialogue with participants that extends over the boundaries of research phases.

¹⁰ Such as Dale's "planners" and "drifters", Willis "lads" and "ear oles", Wakeford's "conformists", "colonists", "rebels", "intransigents" and "retreatists" (quoted in Woods 1980: 17) or "boff", "goodie-goodie" or "keener" which Pollard (1995) recorded.

- What is the journey, the movement through the portrayed landscape of stories?
- Does this correlate with journeys actually made in everyday life?
- What about that journey, central to my study, from home, through the territory of peers, to school?
- Within that journey what logical steps does the teller take?
- Does the teller ask the listener to take steps, or assume some have already been taken?
- Similarly what emotive steps, leaps or dives?
- What kind of movement is involved in the humour or pathos that the story either draws upon or elicits?
- How is telling shared, competed for, effectively retained or stolen?
- What role does prosody and para-linguistical features play in answering all these questions?

PLACING QUESTIONS

Though critical decisions about the study placement were taken at the beginning of the research process, the choice was not a simple one. In the beginning it meant taking into consideration several other approaches and their related concerns. In the long term it meant facing several more choices as the process was enacted.

As well as Rampton, the work of Serpell (1993) and Pollard (1996, 1999) was also very influential. All three researchers pay particular attention to what terms mean for the communities that use them and what implications this has for the advocacy or agency of those in the community. Pollard's work concentrates on the individual education strategies of children in a British setting, using ethnographic and case study methods. Serpell's work concentrates on the context of formal schooling in rural Zambia, using extensive ethnographic as well as detailed linguistical research. The work of all three researchers described was carried out over a much longer time periods with greater resources of various kinds than I could muster. As well, their research was located within one society, albeit ones with cultural complexities. Despite its name, comparative education that actually involves fieldwork in more

than one country is fairly uncommon.¹¹ Whilst one of the unique contributions of this study is that it addresses this gap in the literature (Noah and Eckstein 1998: 54), this state of affairs also means that there was very little methodology to guide cross-cultural field work.¹² Taking these factors into consideration, I had to find ways to condense or limit what I would do.

PLACEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The linguistical complexities crucial to the understanding that Serpell (1993) gained, made me realise the linguistical implications for my own study and were a contributing factor in locating the southern part of my research in the Caribbean, rather than the more difficult multilingual settings of multiple indigenous languages and dialects in Africa (Myers-Scotton, 1992). Much of what I needed to gain an appreciation of would be expressed in informal situations. There are local differences in how Patwa¹³ is spoken within Jamaica, and marked differences to Standard English, however, the languages do share a core vocabulary, which greatly aided although sometimes confused, the familiarisation and interpretation process. Locating the research in Jamaica also gave me the opportunity to continue to explore themes of African culture in engagement with northern cultures begun in the MSc. research I did with African post-graduate students studying in the north (Cross 1995). The role of African heritage in the Caribbean is a contested one. There are sharp disjunctures within the discourse about African culture between disciplines that are indicative of wider ambiguities within society (Henry 2000; Brathwaite 1971; Nettleford 1970; Carrington 1999; Chevannes 1995).

The choice of Scotland for the northern setting also grew out of earlier work and training experiences, most notably with the Scottish Storytelling Forum. Selecting both settings was a mix of considerations and factors: prior experience, advice of

¹¹ Even work such as Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, Mosier (1993) which does report fieldwork in several different cultures, does not involve comparisons across cultural settings by the same researcher. Alexander (2000) and Schweisfurth (2000) are notable exceptions.

¹² Much of the cross-cultural research literature is of a statistics-based quantitative paradigm which has been critiqued for the several ethnocentric structural assumptions and lack of applicability (Long 1992).

¹³ Patwa is the most common spelling used in the press and popular culture for the creole language of Jamaica, and is the spelling those who speak it most often use. For further information on the debate about the representation of Patwa see Cooper and Devonish (1995).

supervisor and community practitioners, accessibility, funding implications, relationships with staff at particular schools and with other institutional “gatekeepers”. This process was negotiated over some time and had its pitfalls and risks.

Originally I intended to compare one school in each country. In the process of developing the design, it was pointed out to me that even a brief stay in a second setting would provide a useful comparison. In the Scottish setting, I explored possible placements with three different schools with the intention of narrowing it down to one. As it turned out, I did extensive work in two settings. Though it became clear even in the first week that one school was much easier to work in, and had many more positive aspects to it, or perhaps precisely because these dynamics made themselves apparent quite early on, I did not withdraw from the more difficult school. The advice from anthropological literature (Cohen 1994, Oakley 1991) to pay attention to difficulties and tensions, rather than avoiding them, kept me at the school, though at several points I was all but convinced that the hours of field and analysis work invested in the school would ultimately not be able to be included in the final study.

The first Jamaican field setting I intended to work in more closely resembled the socio-economic conditions of the Scottish ones in that it was on an urban periphery and included families engaged in a wide range of employment or income generating strategies. However, it proved problematic on a number of levels. Time and funding constraints, internal administrative problems at the school, the curtailment of the kinds of informal interactions integral to the study due to the commuter nature of the school, the predominance of tourist culture, and therefore community members’ stance towards myself, more than outweighed the socio-economic factors in assessing suitability. Fortunately, I was able to re-arrange a setting as the primary location of fieldwork¹⁴ and was able to use findings from the first setting as useful contextualising information. Although the specific nature of the study does not allow me to make generalisations about the culture of either Jamaica or Scotland, the comparison of schools within each country provided a useful check that the dynamics that I was observing were not idiosyncratic or isolated, but were similar to themes at work elsewhere in each country.

¹⁴ Chambers (1995).

PLACEMENT ISSUES

In comparing the settings there are two different sets of power dynamics and the interaction between them that must be taken into consideration. Integral to this consideration are ethical concerns. Consideration began with the awareness that constructs of children and constructs of colonised cultures have been used in western discourse to mutually define both as inferior, conflating them into a development paradigm. The settings in Jamaica and Scotland are not at the centre, but occupy different positions on the centre-periphery continuum, based on their different histories of resisting, influencing or enduring relationships with centres of power. So also, children are not at the centre of sociological theory, but in recent years their position within society has come under reappraisal (Ceuppens 1995; Prout 2000).

Feminist research has pointed out that the greater the power imbalance between researcher and researched, the greater the danger that that imbalance will affect the communication exchanged (Minister 1991, Anderson and Jack 1991). These dynamics need to be taken all the more carefully into account when working across multiple facets of identity, that mix together generational,¹⁵ cultural¹⁶ and class¹⁷ power imbalances. What one needs to become attuned to are the participants' perceptions of power imbalance, which can be quite fluid or changeable depending on the setting, and which do not necessarily coincide with those that outside "authorities" might assign to them. The power imbalance a child feels, sitting within a classroom confronted with some grammatical structure that makes no apparent sense, is quite different from the power imbalance they perceive when, for instance, having watched the researcher futilely using up an entire box of matches attempting to burn her damp trash, they are then in a position to offer to start the fire for the visiting foreigner, and, using the drippings from melting a polythene bag, manage to do so in one attempt.¹⁸

¹⁵ (Okley 1996; Hart 1998; Johnson 1996; Pellegrini and Gala 1990: 120)

¹⁶ hooks (sic) (1990, 1995).

¹⁷ Macleod (1987).

¹⁸ As Greenfield points out in her critique of Stevenson et al (1978) competency and confidence are not constants but change in correspondence to the degree that tasks, "reflect skills important to (local) socialisation." See also Martin and Stuart Smith (1998) on effects of expression in home language for bi-lingual students.

CROSS CULTURAL

Fieldwork itself and the act of its inscription are thus circumstances that necessarily soak the anthropological effort with cultural conventions, only some of which are recoverable in analysis and not all of which are easily identified in cross-cultural encounters.

(Brady 1993: 260)

There is a growing body of literature, which critiques the invisible assumptions of European culture and situations as normal within Euro-centric depictions of Non-European settings as exotic or other. Ennew in particular has criticised the transposition of "childhood":

The idea that children must be excluded from political and economic life is almost wholly inappropriate for many southern contexts in which children have economic and other responsibilities to fulfil within families and communities. They are not the sentimental core of nuclear families but rather part of an inter-generational system of interchange and mutual responsibilities. (1999:7)

As Long stresses "interface" situations, including the interface between researcher and researched, where different life-worlds interact and interpenetrate are situations in which social discontinuities can either be reproduced or transformed (1992: 6, 245).

The intention to redress power imbalances in ethnographic accounts is well demonstrated, but the execution proves problematic. There are two major factors, which, I believe, contribute to the disparity between intention and performance. The first is a pressure to conform to established academic discourse, which is heavily reliant upon a linear use of logic and language. The second factor is the difficulty involved in contextualising one's arguments by engaging with the interpretations and arguments of those researched (Long 1992: 25; De Vries 1992: 47). It requires a depth of interaction and involvement that transforms subject of a study into participants with a study. Although this is the ideal Spradley (1979) sets out for the discipline, many of the cited studies above attest that it is much more easily said than done.

For these reasons, it was important to spend as much time in the north as the south, to do a complete cycle of the research process in all its dimensions, and to do this prior to attempting it in the south. The time spent in the northern setting sensitised me to assumptions and norms, I might take for granted and allowed me to gain a, "consciousness of what we are thinking with as well as what we are thinking about"

(Brady: 1993: 254). The first phase of fieldwork challenged perceptions I had of northern education. It clarified both the striking differences as well as similarities between my own education experience as a child more than twenty years ago, and modern British education, in a way that no perusal of a written account of current British educational practice, ethnographic or otherwise could have, insightful though many of these works are (Davis 1998; Stead, Closs and Arshad 1999; Munn 1992).

CROSS GENERATIONAL:

A concern over the lack of children's perspectives in representations of schooling is well evidenced (Lewis and Lindsay 2000) as is a theoretical understanding of how researchers perhaps unwittingly contribute to it. The Adlers begin their book commenting, "we know almost nothing about the inside of child institutions and child groups."¹⁹ They continue:

Where researchers situate themselves both concretely and ideologically in relation to children, not only influences the assumptions they make, the questions they raise, and the types of answers they seek, but also has a significant effect on the outcome of their research. (1998: 5)

Andrade remarks similarly,

(H)istorically in research literature children have rarely been acknowledged as having valid knowledge or perspectives about their own social worlds. What is written is taken from observations about them as subjects. . . We see primarily the adults in those relations as the adult fashions him or herself and as he or she fashions the child as an approximation of the adult. . . .We cannot understand adult-child relationships within the home, school and community without understanding the children's community. A community that although separate from that of adults mediates adult child relations, personal as well as institutional. (1998: 94, 96)

As this quote points out, children have a form of community amongst themselves and power relations amongst children are as important to take into consideration as they are between children and adults. There were many issues that came up for assessment: the embedded norms, constructs of children, the overlay of child centred pedagogy upon a more entrenched authoritarian, possibly Victorian, construct of children, definitions of discipline, the permeable-ness of the boundary

¹⁹ Lloyd-Smith and Tarr argue similarly that, "the reality experienced by children and youth in educational settings cannot be fully comprehended by inference and assumption" (2000: 61).

between school and community as conceptualised and monitored by school staff, as experienced and negotiated by children, the penetration of marketing strategies into children's play structures and repertoires and the ways in which urban or rural environments structure conceptual maps and define boundaries. I had to negotiate my stance between teachers' and children's perspectives on what was ethical. In order to conduct research it was crucial to let children express themselves more freely than they would be allowed to in class. Yet, I also had a responsibility to respect the tacit understanding of limits upon which teachers based their permission or consent to entrust children to my "care". I was aware that I did not always share the same value base for setting limits as all the teachers in the schools.²⁰ It was not easy to predict the issues that came up within discussion. Even if some of the children felt comfortable exploring topics that came up, how could I know all children in the group did? Did I have a responsibility to protect them from their peers? The problem from the schools' perspective was not so much the exploration of the topic, but its misrepresentation to parents, which could cause problems. As one administrator pointed out to me, I had to consider the effect I had on children as a role model.

What I chose to role model was a respectful listener. The challenge was not to hide that power imbalance between adults and children, or to ask that participants pretend it did not exist, but, rather, to build trust through consistent respectful behaviour towards them so that dynamics within the group worked to redress the imbalance in the larger context (Lanclos 2000: 69-70). The goal was not to make them see me as their friend, but rather to provide safe conditions which foregrounded their relations to each other. This is no small task, as it sets as a paradigm a very different one from that still prevalent in education in which the adult is the central source both of information and structure. This task is not accomplished by attempting to fade into the background. It involves mutual structuring, stance and counter stance, and the testing and resetting of boundaries.

²⁰ As Lloyd-Smith and Tarr also note: "Placing adults as responsible for the protection and enforcement of children's rights conforms to the notion commonly held in western societies that children lack responsibility, competence and capability." They go on to quote Qvortup: "Protection is mostly accompanied by exclusion in one way or the other. Protection may be....rather to protect adults or the adult social orders against disturbances from the presence of children" (2000: 66).

In the Jamaican context, I not only had the responsibility that teachers have of being the parent "sue generis", I actually was a parent within the community. My son attended the same school and often played with the children with whom I was working. This undoubtedly enriched my understanding. As Adler and Adler (1998) comment, being a parent/researcher can have advantages, but also gives rise to confusions, and requires its own set of negotiations about power.

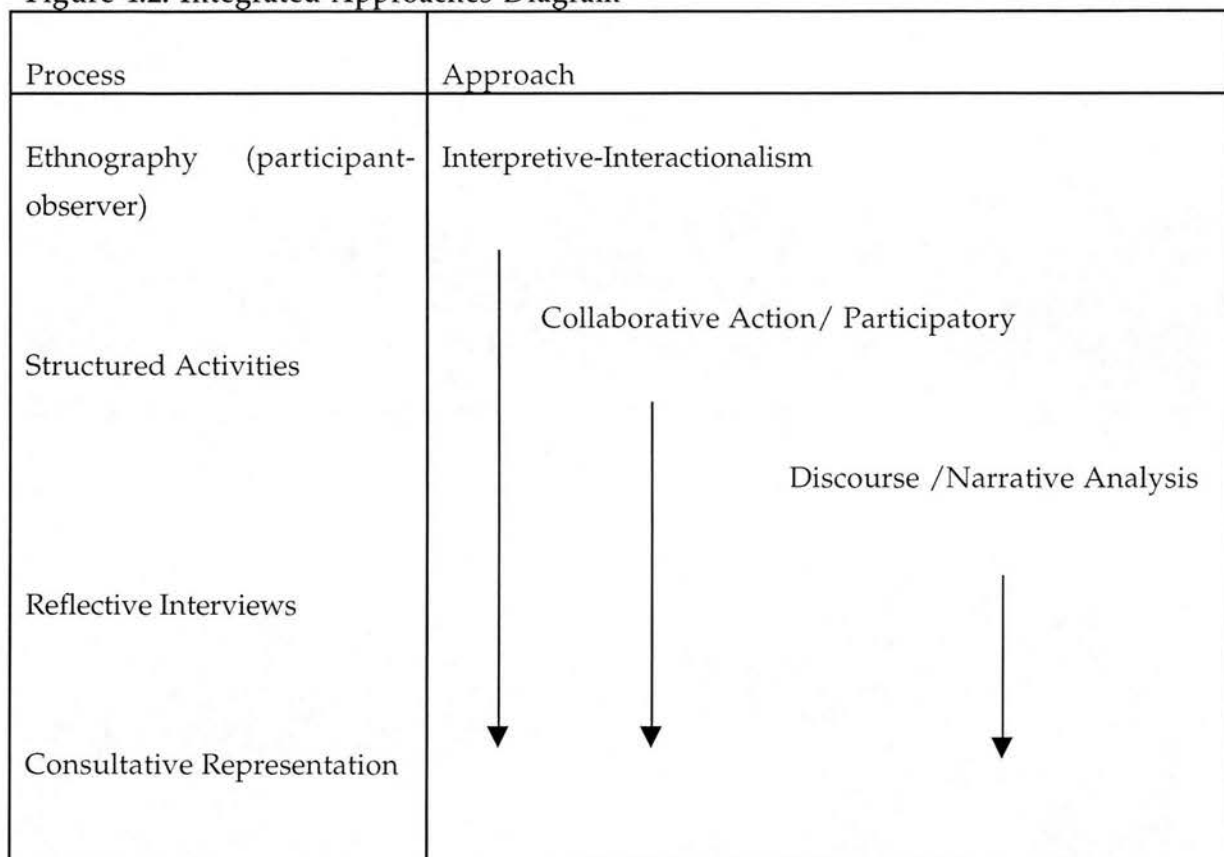
FIELD METHODS

Inquiry itself is the behaviour of the questioner.

(Heidegger, quoted in Denzin, 1989: 53)

Work in the field can be seen as involving three different approaches. They are not sequential or distinct, but are better conceptualised as the components of a musical chord. The first process being sounded first, but retained, while the second, and third in turn are also sounded, till in the end all three processes are working together. Whilst an integration of differing elements requires that their implications be carefully thought out at every stage, the saliency of each element can be highlighted in relation to particular stages, and so I present them as connected to these stages. However, I would point out, for instance, the intention of working collaboratively, while it becomes most pertinent in the second and third stages, nevertheless needs to be negotiated when entering the field in the first stage. Similarly, the ethnographic approach does not cease to be of importance past the first stage, but underlies all further work.

Figure 4.2: Integrated Approaches Diagram



FIELD WORK STAGE ONE: ETHNOGRAPHY

Fieldwork began with an ethnographic participant observation approach because language needs to be contextualised and understood by immersion in the context in which it arises, to counteract the tendency to reify and thereby misconstrue what one records. As Bloch (1994) has argued in general, and Lave (1993) has demonstrated specifically in the case of education, thinking that is embodied and enacted is as crucial to understanding the meaning in a situation as is the thinking articulated in speech.²¹ In fact, it can be argued that understanding articulated thought remains cursory until it is wedded to an understanding of embodied and enacted thought.

²¹ Gumperz also reviews northern ethnographies in which significant differences between classroom and home learning practices are portrayed, (1986: 57-59).

As Bailey (1996: 68-71) recommends, I went into the field conscious of several different dimensions of participants' experience to which I should be attuned: moods, body language, physical surroundings, cultural artefacts or symbols, timing and pacing, spatial relationships, para-linguistic features.²² I paid attention to body language, the characteristics of speech and speakers, what types of words were used and borrowed, as well as who did most of the talking, whose suggestions were followed or rejected or ignored, who interrupted, who did not, and the enacted or embodied equivalents of these nuances.

Consequently, the first phase was one of observation and familiarisation with each group of students, their school and community through engagement in tasks in either the school or community setting. I sought to find a role that allowed me to be more of an observer than a participant so that I could climatise or familiarise myself with the settings, routines, and most importantly, individuals without being under pressure to perform a highly visible and therefore defining role or task that would limit who I could interact with (Hammersley 1992; Wulff 1995). This entailed taking up different opportunities in the different settings.

Even as I began to negotiate a role in schools, I explored relationships with people whose various positions in the community gave them different vantage points from which they assessed its school and children. The perspectives consulted ranged from professionals within the communities such as social workers, church ministers, police and nurses, to those with less prestigious, but, nevertheless, vital jobs such as dinner ladies and janitors, as well as neighbours, older siblings and grandparents.

Participating in the community beyond the school walls in Scotland meant attending structured events where it was permissible to interact with children (Girl Guides in the middle class neighbourhood, out of school club and football matches in the working class one). Although I lived on the same side of the city, I was still without the community and had to consciously work at finding ways in, such as deliberately shopping at those stores most local to the school. In Scotland I made field notes entering and exiting the communities on a regular basis. Whilst in Jamaica, it felt as though I never left the field during waking hours. Even when travelling the some 30 miles to the market town, the mini van was an extension of the community as was the open-air market. Only when I stepped inside the air-conditioned premises of the

²² See also Emerson, Fretz, Shaw (1995: 14, 28)

shopping mall did I stray to the edges of the community—although even there I met teachers from the school who took advantage of the cool climate whilst waiting for their evening course to begin at the nearby school.

Yet, in another sense I was often kept at one remove, very politely and graciously in Jamaica. There is a Jamaican proverb, "Play wit puppy, puppy lick your mout' ", which it seemed as if some members always kept in mind when dealing with the white visitor. It is an interesting commentary on the communication networks that make up the African diaspora that I first came across the explication of this remark in bell hook's (sic) critique of the growth industry of cultural studies. She begins her essay by quoting her maternal grandmother's use of this same proverb in reference to white visitors, which she interprets:

These lectures were intended to emphasise the importance of distance, of not allowing folks to get close enough 'to get up in your face'. It was also about the danger of falsely assuming familiarity, about presuming to have knowledge of matters that had not been revealed. (1990: 123)

In all three settings indirectness played a part in shaping the culture, whether that has to do with the tight knit nature of an inter-dependent rural community²³, or had evolved out of the resistance culture of the slave era or working class structures. It is a dynamic that can incorrectly be collapsed into the characterisation of "restricted code" (Berstein 1975). One had to consider the many options of implied messages as well as the overt. I was often treated with cautious generosity. This is not to say that I was treated stereotypically, nor would I want to reduce community members to stereotypes. There is another saying in Jamaica, "You not easy, you know," which means you aren't easy to understand, or one-dimensional. It is sort of a back handed compliment, as it has connotations of being the opposite of "soft" which definitely was a criticism. There were a number of times people said this of me, indicating to me they were working at understanding me. There were as many instances when I thought something similar of those I was seeking to understand.

This is not to say that the Scottish settings did not have their own "gatekeeping" issues. Several years' living and working in Scotland meant I experienced these differently. I have very different embodied experiences of the two settings. I

²³ Reisman's (1967) examination of Herskovits' notions of respect, reticence and indirection as they apply to a rural Caribbean setting raises important cultural as well as linguistical issues, pertinent also to this study.

experienced as learning in Jamaica, activities and processes that in Scotland were already embedded. In Scotland I had to work at making the familiar strange; in Jamaica I had to pay more attention to making the strange familiar.

The places and instances in which people felt it easy to assert or draw limits, in contrast to the instances in which disclosure seemed unproblematic were very different amongst the settings. The possibility of speaking to children informally outside the school structure was much easier in the working class Scottish community and the rural Jamaican community than it was in the middle class Scottish community, but for different reasons. In the working class community it seemed to require a great deal more trust and understanding for a parent to indicate criticism of the school, whereas in the Jamaican rural setting criticism of certain aspects of the school were quite publicly asserted.

In all settings I had to listen carefully to members' changing responses to the same question as relationships or circumstances in which the question was raised changed. It would be easy to conclude that the answers given in more private circumstances or at a more trusting stage of relationships constituted their "real" answer. It is perhaps more important to focus on what these differing answers indicated about the roles and requirements of the different circumstances, how a public or school associated role or identity differed from a familial or community oriented one.

One can be sure when one has crossed the physical gate into the physical structure of the school, but I could never be sure to what extent I had crossed social or psychologically constructed gates.

I concluded that gate keeping is a continual process to be negotiated. Throughout the study I strove continually to be aware of possible opportunities to gain a perspective on the informal side of the students', parents' and teachers' lives, planning various ways to engage with them, and developing alternative strategies should these opportunities, for any number of reasons, fail to materialise as expected.

It is also important to note that, particularly in Jamaica, these opportunities arose exactly when I did not try. There were days when I cut the motor so to speak and just saw where the current would take me—and it took me to important moments of insight, whether this be in the form of a speech given at a wedding reception by the

bride's former primary school head teacher, or as a result of a neighbour stopping by for coffee. Other times I forced myself to persist through growing feelings of fatigue or resistance, and this too yielded important insights of barriers crossed, not always pleasantly.

FIELD ENTRIES

A brief description of the differences in the daily process of entering the field will indicate some of the issues involved. In Scotland my entrance routine would consciously begin as the city's rush hour tailed off, often after a brief bout on the internet at the office. Whilst making my way to the appropriate bus for the day, I would often grab a cup of coffee at a street kiosk or deli. The bus would have a decidedly different feel to it than the one my son and I would have travelled upon less than an hour ago—no briefcases or suits. The few occupants would either be older women usually sitting in pairs, or young mothers struggling with strollers and prams. As the bus rumbled away from the city centre, a mixture of working class accents, and the football headlines from the back of the free on-board paper would flit through my consciousness. The bus travelled down hill and down the socio-economic ladder. On the edge of the council housing scheme, the bus passed derelict industrial works. One large building had been converted into an enclosed play-space, another building's sole purpose was as backing for a large billboard fronting a busy road, which acted as an intermediate ring road for the city. Over the period of research, this billboard greeted me with advertisements for TV programmes, mobile phone services, a new line of alcoholic beverage, among other life necessities as I stepped off the bus.

Crossing the road, I would make my way past the facade of the housing estate with pristinely kept gardens (of those who participated in the tenant buy-out scheme of the late 80s early 90s) to a markedly different landscape metres away. I would then pick my way between animal faeces and discarded carry-outs in various stages of dispersal across the broken pavement and note the progress of the nearby housing demolition. The demolition progressed in inverse proportion to the accretion of dumped household items in the vacant lot at the school's perimeter. Weekly, if not daily, soggy mattresses, rusted washing machines, and smaller items of detritus were deposited, the mounds rising as the walls fell. Keeping an eye out for stray dogs, I anticipated various avoidance strategies. Once within the gates of the school grounds, I would tramp through the bleak, featureless (unless one counts the razor

wire around drainpipes and first floor fixtures) expanse of cement. I would make a brief appearance on the school video equipment, and wait for the faint electric buzz to signal my acceptance. Not infrequently this brief pause in the ritual caused "Dunblane" and the attached tragic narrative, which has literally altered the physical structure of schools across Scotland, to impinge upon the conceptual frame I brought to this day's encounters.

On alternative days I would take a slightly different bus route. Once past the glint of chrome and neon that could be glimpsed beyond the landscaped banks enclosing a shopping mall complex, the bus route began to climb a steep hill. House construction was nearing completion on the left. To the right through a stone gateway a circle drive opened up to school buildings set back in a green lawn. As I would pass the caretaker's house with its configuration of garden gnomes, I could often hear the children in the nursery enclosure playing underneath the trees, some with large wooden tricycles or toy cars. A slightly less manicured patch of green up close to the buildings proclaimed the school's ethos of child-participation. The landscaping here was done as part of one class's environment theme activities, and gave the school the same sort of feel that children's artwork displayed on kitchen refrigerators gives a home. Light flowed through this building with its wide windows. Sheltered to the south by a sloping hill of trees, that filtered both light and wind, the pastel coloured walls exuded warmth and a slightly worn elegance. The first sound that often greeted me as I entered was a kind of bubbling, tumbling sound of children playing or dancing in the school's hall.

In Jamaica traffic also signalled the beginning of the day, as the noise of mini vans ferrying secondary school students to the early start of the first shift intermingled with the more rural sounds of goats and chickens. The noise of the neighbour children bathing with buckets and basins in their back yard kept pace with my own preparation, as greetings from children from further up the ridge passing impressed upon us the need for our own departure. The mile and a half I walked to school with my son afforded some of the most beautiful views of searing blue mountain ridges swathed in mist and cloud imaginable. Coffee also played a role in the morning routine. Close at hand the gradual ripening of coffee berries from green to bright red marked the passing season. In yards and drives the mounds of them, poured out on concrete slabs to dry, turned pale. New foliage burst out pale and sticky with a blush of red to it, twisting my usual association of that colour with autumn. Waves of children in khaki and navy blue passed us by or kept pace with us. Frequently

one or two older girls shyly, silently would offer to carry my thermos for me. Or a van driver would wordlessly pull over and offer to carry me free of charge to the school gates, in keeping with the local understanding that most teachers enjoyed. I do not mean to convey the sense that the walk was silent. Every time I passed someone on the road or in their yard, some kind of greeting was exchanged, even if it was just a nod, an exchange of eye contact, or the calling out of a pet name, even the Rasta farmers soft greeting, "Bless, Princess". The only impediment to entering the school would have been sliding on the mud tracks slickened by rainfall overnight. On some occasions, the few members of the community with a decidedly different grasp on reality than most might have been within the school yard as well, mumbling or ranting dependent on a number of factors beyond any one person's accurate assessment. There are no electronic security systems. Each classroom had two wide doors opening straight into the surrounding yard for ventilation that were only closed during hard rain.

In these passages I am seeking to point out the importance of something like *habitus*²⁴, the subtle but important framing of consistent concrete factors that structure the experience and therefore in significant ways the analysis. These background conditions frame what I can pick out as foreground.

RECORDING CONTEXT

Differences in how I experienced each field setting became reflected in differences in how I recorded field notes. In both settings I took up several different methods of collecting and organising data including a logbook, diary, field notes, check lists, sketch and mapping book, and photographs. The process of engaging with popular literature that had begun in the pre-field period intensified. I kept a clippings folder, which included virtually any text that might seem remotely relevant, keeping in mind the broad definition of popular culture. It included advertisements, calendars, packaging, local newsletters, children's presents, Christmas decorations, pictures, letters and children's class work. I also requested children share with me their

²⁴ I am not in agreement with the significance Bourdieu (1997) places on the structural determinism of *habitus*. I do take on board the more general point of which he has made the research community aware, that being it is often the unnoticed, everyday features of life that are most telling.

favourite books, comic books, videos, films, songs or web sites, and went along to art projects, and performances given in the area.

Not nearly as colourful but as essential was a file kept on documents not available to students, but, nevertheless, impacting on the structure of the school, such as curriculum guidelines, as well as educational department marketing materials, mission statements, etc.

I also experimented with less formal ways of recording experience that more readily invited children's participation.²⁵ Sketching played an intermediate role, it was a way of interacting as well as recording. Children could immediately see and respond to what I was making of them. In one case in particular it worked to level the power imbalance with a boy for whom Standard English in written or spoken form seemed very difficult. He was very good at drawing, and we got into the habit of taking turns drawing a scene together.

I invited children to map with me the physical setting and diagram the physical interaction. As well as changing the terms of engagement with the children, this activity changed the ways in which I myself engaged with my surroundings. It enabled me to explore my observations with other parts of my brain and to understand the embodied process of making representations and interpretations differently.

Much of what I recorded in notes about the activity in and around the school was routine. Finding moments within the routine when clashes or crisis (De Vries 1992) opened up underlying assumptions or dynamics were rare. The chance of being on hand to observe was a matter of luck; the only way of increasing the odds, was to be around as much as possible. Taking advantage of such moments involved mapping these events, taking extensive field notes on the day, making this interaction the topic of subsequent field notes, re-reading notes, writing reflective notes, noting any further reference to the event that other participants subsequently made, and fostering conversation about the event when possible.

²⁵ In Eisner's view, "the selection of a form through which the world is to be represented not only influences what we can say, it also influences what we are likely to experience," (Eisner 1991:8).

Although it is strongly recommended to record field notes on the day, before sleeping, I noticed that my process took a number of days. I wrote in waves. Getting down one version freed up my mind to think about details, more subtle interactions or underlying themes. What I could record the next day often seemed more valuable than what I wrote on the day, but was enabled by the more prosaic immediate writing. This process alerted me to another gatekeeper, with which I had to contend throughout fieldwork, and that is the gatekeeper within, which makes a variety of editorial decisions.

The process of writing field notes and reviewing them blended into each other. It was important to check absences, and tendencies. Particularly when I began taping I needed to check that I was not becoming over reliant on recording to do the observing for me. This process suffered when transcribing became a part of the daily process. Writing and re-reading field notes had to compete with transcribing, and varied depending on the relative importance of each task as I assessed them at the time.

Whilst making all these various kinds of records or observations, the work of interpreting was already in motion. There was a specific approach underlying all this activity, which is derived from Denzin's *Interpretive Interactionism*.

UNDERLYING APPROACH: INTERPRETIVE INTERACTIONISM

In the above section I have described what I was doing as a participant-observer. Here I want to detail something of how, and with what intent I did so. From the moment I stepped into the field I began not only to describe but to interpret events and persons. By interpreting I mean that I began to move back and forth between the theories delineated in chapter two, on the one hand, and the practicalities of lived experience on the other. This movement back and forth can broadly be described as a process of grounding theory (Buroway 1991), and more specifically can be associated with Denzin's *Interpretive Interactionism* (1989). This approach pays close attention to how stories can help a researcher understand turning points and crucial developments in a person's life, i.e. that "shape the meaning persons give to themselves and their life projects" (1989: 14), in this specific instance, how stories can encode layers of meaning for children, in which their identity and the plausible strategies they might enact are embedded.

Denzin recommends a process for doing this that is based in Symbolic Interactionism with its emphasis on the existential thought of Sartre and Merleau Ponty. This approach has been criticised as being “macro-blind”(Troman 1999: 33) and for the biased relativism of “naturalism” (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983:13). One needs to bear in mind that both Hammersley and Denzin’s works have evolved considerably since the initial approach was developed and critiqued. Denzin’s work (1996) has grown to incorporate post structuralist and feminist critique in order to address concerns with the social construction of gender, power, knowledge, history and emotion, whilst Hammersley’s review of the history of interactionist ethnography points out its strengths as well as the challenges to which it has responded (1999: 5-9).

Denzin’s approach involves five steps:

- deconstructing pre-conceived ideas and assumptions, capturing or securing multiple instances of experience,
- bracketing, which here means highlighting or fore-grounding key or essential features across the gathered instances,
- constructing, which involves seeing the pattern in these features as they reveal common steps or a common narrative, and finally,
- comparing this analysis to the original setting to see if it rings true.

(Denzin 1989: 30-31)

As Denzin repeatedly stresses, key to the entire process is capturing experience in such a way as to describe it thickly. According to Denzin, “a full or complete thick description is biographical, historical, situational, relational and interactional” (Denzin 1989: 91). Descriptions may focus more on one aspect or another. These can be helpful, but Denzin cautions that incomplete or glossed descriptions can lead to dangerously misleading interpretations. Interestingly, Denzin uses the writings on Balinese cockfights of Geertz, who is credited with introducing the term “thick description”, to exemplify the faults of description that is not thick enough (Denzin 1989: 116). Denzin criticises Geertz for eliding his interpretation with description in such a way to suppress the native’s voice. However, he adds, “bad thick description can be put to good use, but only if one has sense enough to stay in the field long enough to learn what he or she doesn’t know” (Denzin 1989:100).

Acknowledging that description cannot help but include interpretation, Denzin draws on Bakhtin's concept of polyphonic writing. Denzin recommends that this be done in a dialogic or polyphonic way, "because they allow multiple voices of interpretation to be heard" (1989: 113). Chouliaraki outlines how this approach can be used in educational research and describes such a process as "interrupted narrative", in which the interpreting that is being done by researcher is clearly demarcated as such, and set off from, yet, presented alongside what is recorded or attributed to the person from whom research is being collected.

It is important to note that Denzin sees this approach as suited to answering questions of how not why, and so has led to this approach being labelled as naturalistic or "merely" descriptive. While I would not want my own stance to be viewed as prescriptive, and would be in agreement with the argument that research for too long has erred on the side of assuming it has too much explanatory power, I take Hammersley's point (1983: 13) that all social actors are making decisions based on conclusions as to why things are the way they are, and that for the researcher to alone exclude him or herself from doing so is artificial, even absurd. Hammersley indicates that researchers can ask why questions, but should do so reflexively. I would assert that crucial to this reflexivity is the involvement of the social actors in the reflection process.

Although Denzin recommends this approach for understanding those who have undergone crisis such as alcoholism or battering, I would argue, as Phelan et al. (1991) do, that one's decision about one's identity in relation to schooling has as crucial consequences as these other events, and constitutes a major, if not traumatic, turning point for those involved. Denzin borrows the term epiphany from James Joyce to allude to various kinds of turning points one can experience.

First there are those moments that are major and touch every fabric of a person's life. Their effects are immediate and long term. Second, there are those epiphanies that represent eruptions, or reactions, to events that have been going on for a long period of time. Third are those events that are minor, yet, symbolically representative of major problematic moments in a relationship. Fourth, and finally, are those episodes whose effects are immediate, but their meanings are only given later, in retrospection, and in the reliving of the event (1989: 123).

Throughout research I was continuously listening for these various kinds of turning points, whether it was teachers describing how they came to be teachers, parents

about their role parenting, and most importantly children as they disclosed how they navigated their place at school.

FIELD WORK STAGE TWO: STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

In seeking to interpret what is being communicated, it is important to pause and reflect on how children communicate. Failure to appreciate what kinds of translations children are having to make to communicate can lead to errors in interpretation of what they communicate. The form of their communication gives clues to the perspective they have on what they communicate and their role within the world they are translating into symbols. School brings them into contact not only with cultural content but with cultural forms and registers. How fully they grasp and use these forms, how they themselves see the differences between these forms and those more familiar to them, have consequences for what they learn that is transmitted in these forms. Gardner's (1992) work on the different kinds of intelligences or abilities and therefore, different communicative strengths, as well as Lave and Rogoff's (1984) work on embodied knowledge underscore this concern.

For these reasons I did not remain a passive observer, restricting myself to information that was only transmitted through the regular structures and routines of the school day, but sought to create a space between work and play where activities usually only possible in one or the other sphere could cross over, mix and perhaps reveal different insights. Aware that stories can take many forms and are often embedded in different mediums, my intent in facilitating structured activities was to test some of the boundaries between mediums of expression, in order to better understand which mediums children were most fluent in, and which also they were most fluent in translating between.

I wanted to understand not only what they thought (the meaning from which epiphanies might be being formed) but also how their thoughts were shaped (limited or enabled) by communicative structures.

Thus, in the second phase of research I became a much more active participant with students, eliciting their stories,²⁶ their responses to each other's stories, and subsequent versions and revisions of stories introduced to the group from the school curriculum or the surrounding community. Although I came to the field with a pool of activities that I could draw upon, I used my time as observer to get a feel for which activities might either appeal most to students or help bridge communicative barriers or divides. Important to the process was negotiating with students about the choices of the form their expression took. This entailed a preliminary process of identifying the options, and sometimes creating new ones. As well as talking, exploration sessions included opportunities to draw, act, build, and demonstrate. The ethos underlying this line of inquiry was that of collaborative action research.

UNDERLYING APPROACH: COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH:

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN INTERPRETATION AND UNDERSTANDING

A Collaborative Action approach makes more explicit the processes at work within interactional interpretation. It opens the grounded theory research process further, allowing not only the researchers but the researched to ask questions and propose possible accounts and theories. Mutual negotiations take on a more substantial form. Prior stages of the research helped to build the rapport, laying the groundwork for fruitful discussions and decisions at this point. As Oja and Smulyan describe it, "the process emphasises recurring cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and revising" (1988: 17). Thus defined, collaborative action research is not conducted upon a pre-set linear path, but builds in the possibility of flexibility based on reflexivity. This process allows for modification as ideas become shared and better understood amongst participants as co-researchers.

Winter (1989: 43) articulates the role of reflexivity within collaborative action research. Reflexivity is a three-step process in which one, accounts are collected, two, the reflexive basis of accounts is made explicitly and three, subjective claims that are made explicitly can then be transformed into questions. Being able to spiral

²⁶ Several researchers note the valuable role stories and vignettes can play in opening up discussion and inviting a wider array of expression in child participatory research such as Fren (1987) and Hazel (1996) quoted in France, Bendelow, Williams (2000: 153) and Mauthner (1997: 20).

through these three steps in a dialogic process with research participants was a crucial part of the research.

APPROXIMATING COLLABORATION

Although this study was inspired by collaborative action research, that ethos had to compete with other paradigms of researcher-practitioner relations.²⁷ There were several constraining factors that meant I came to the field with my own research goals already fairly well defined. To obtain permission to be in a school I had to present the ministry or department concerned with my stated goals before I actually had the opportunity to negotiate those goals with the practitioners who would be most closely involved in and affected by my presence in their school. This meant that the first few weeks of fieldwork involved some back tracking and renegotiating in order to open up space for teachers' and students' choices. This was only partially successful. One of the most important lessons that was reinforced by field work was an awareness that more preparatory work and resources are required to make a research design fully collaborative from start to finish.

Most collaborative action research is aimed at specific practical goals which the participants help construct. To use this approach in qualitative research requires more time. I did collaborate with teachers on practical goals that they wanted to meet within the demands of lesson plans. The degree to which they were interested in the more interpretative questions varied greatly, as did their willingness to open up discussions with students. It took time to come to understand each other, and then on the basis of that understanding begin to respond to each other. What it was that we were collaborating about changed over time.

UNDERLYING APPROACH: CHILD PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

On another level at the same time as I was drawing on the literature on collaborative action research to develop relationships and activities with teachers, I was also drawing on another area of research literature to build relationships through activities with the students. I am referring to what is called participatory child

²⁷ Although there is an increased emphasis on practitioner or professional engagement with research (McNiff 1993), teachers' familiarity with the concept varied widely.

research.²⁸ Although there are many similarities between the approaches, primarily a concern to respect participants, their attitudes, abilities and goals, there are important differences.

Being collaborative with teachers and students meant very different things as they had different interests and different ways of constructing what we could do together, be these social constructs or other factors or limits. Adults don't appreciate curiosity so much. Conversations with teachers centred around mutually constructing competence and what it was we could do for someone else, namely the students that were their responsibility. Conversations with children were primarily about what they wanted to do as and for themselves.

The tensions or competing loyalties of participant observer are made more explicit when one becomes a collaborator. Children seemed much more tolerant of a fluidity in my role than adults, they allowed me to be authoritative in some situations, and then forgave me it seemed. Teachers seemed less willing to allow me subversive or playful moments, although this was more so in the Scottish settings where lines between adult and children's roles seem more clearly drawn and where I was more susceptible to subtle socialisation. In the Jamaican setting teachers were often playful themselves in between classes, willing to appear informal in front of their students at break and lunch time, and to a certain extent to be informal with them.

It is easy to gravitate towards teachers and difficult to account for not going to the staff room for tea.²⁹ Seeing things from teachers' perspectives attaches more easily

²⁸ There is a growing movement of research in advocacy and development circles which implement child to child research and information sharing (Edward 1996; Fine and Sandstrom 1988; Gordon 1998; Hart 1998; James and Prout 1997; Johnson 1996; Johnson et al 1998). A recent anthology of work in Britain and America details joint projects between researchers and schools in which pupils take on the role of ethnographer and socio-linguists (Curry and Bloome 1998). Strategical and theoretical resources can be drawn from these studies as well as from Andrade (1998), Mercado (1998), and Moll (1994). In arguing for a construct of childhood that sees children as having the right to be consulted about any decisions made about them, Lloyd-Smith and Tarr note that, "participation refers to many types of involvement: economic, social, political, and cultural" (2000: 67).

²⁹ As Goodson (quoted in Moll 1994) points out, making teachers' teaching the focal point of research collaboration is to concentrate on their most vulnerable point and sets up tension or conflict, yet, as others have noted, trying to convince teachers that their teaching is not the focus is also difficult. Nothing observed in the classroom is completely unrelated to the job they are doing.

to existing theoretical frameworks, reconfirms me as an expert, and confirms my role as competent adult. To take children's perspectives risks that adult role. It was difficult to be what was considered playful and at the same time expect adults to take the research I was doing seriously.

France, Bendelow and Williams write persuasively about a gap that needs to be "bridged" when adults attempt to do research with instead of about children. The approach they advocate "paradoxically suggests that on the one hand we recognise children and young people as no different from other research participants yet, on the other hand, as in some sense 'different' " (2000: 153). Many researchers have written about getting on the same level as children. France, Bendelow and Williams point out this is not a matter of constructing a false identity that is acceptable, but should rather be based on four key factors, first and foremost of those being willing to expose one's own genuine curiosity in an honest, open and empathetic way. This entails their second requirement, which is to suspend judgmental attitudes about young people beliefs or behaviours, (in my case, Dancehall lyrics, or World Wrestling Federation). The first two factors often go a long way towards accomplishing their third factor which is nurturing young people's curiosity and providing opportunities for them to present their own views. Fourthly, they recommend being creative and flexible (2000: 152-153). These characteristics are inter-related; curiosity necessitates withholding judgement, which is evidenced by flexibility, all of which are likely to increase children's involvement

My curiosity gave children an opportunity to assert what they knew and what they wanted to do. The importance they attributed to tasks, which I saw as incidental to the activity, opened up for me a different perspective on their criteria for importance, and their processes of learning. For instance, after one group had finished drawing and scribing storybooks, I began sewing the pages into the spine of a card cover. The girls wanted to join in this activity, approaching it with almost more excitement than they had the original task of writing the stories. They had chosen to make a storybook over other options I presented. It was only while sewing that I realised what was important to them about making a storybook. It had more to do with the physical making, giving something form, than the story. While we sat sewing together I had a qualitatively different experience of what it was like to be with them, what kind of conversations we could have. It shifted the power dynamics. The activity of engaging with materials was different from an activity in which engaging with words was the central focus.

Sometimes my questions pushed the boundaries of what they knew and gave them pause to reflect on what they did consider true or realistic. In an evaluation interview one boy from the middle class Scottish school told me that I asked hard questions. He wasn't exactly complaining but wondering about the differences between my questions and the ones with which he was more familiar, the answers to which could usually be found in some text.

I am left with questions about the extent to which my curiosity about their lives encouraged their own curiosity about their lives. I have questions about the meaning of imitation, what kind of curiosity it expresses and about other indirect ways curiosity was expressed. Was their curiosity about me an indirect way of becoming more curious about themselves? They repeatedly asked who I was, what I was doing, how I came to be interested in stories, how I came to be a researcher, who I was and what interests I had as a child—sort of the inverse of the question what do you want to do when you grow up. Through me were they testing the limits of how curious they were entitled to be about themselves? Were they testing out possible scenarios of their own transition into adult identity? These questions raise the issue of the role of adults in children's play in general. Nearly all the play characters children took up in imaginative scenarios were adults, wrestlers, bad men, agent 007, Jackie Chan, etc. Rather than play being a world set apart from adult concerns, it integrally incorporated representations of adults.

EXTENDING PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH TO INCLUDE ANALYSIS

I had hoped I would be able to engage their theoretical curiosity in order to discuss with them the analysis that I was making, just as I sought to do this with teachers. I believe that they were capable of it, but that we lacked common vocabulary and discourse patterns to facilitate such exploration. Shared analysis could gradually be worked towards as a goal, rather than established as a premise. Even without institutional constraints, it seemed that I needed time to get to know and be known before any agreement about a shared goal of any kind would have had much meaning. What agreement I did reach was on a day to day basis about immediate activities with the children, not on a longer analytic basis.

In the reading I have done, several ways of working with students as co-researchers have been presented. I did implement some of these.³⁰ More important than the particular tool or activity was asking myself a central question: am I assuming I must do for them something they are capable of doing themselves? Thus, as trust developed the students took charge of the tape recorder, decided when to turn it on and off, when to listen to what they had just taped, focused the camera, read and commented on my field notes, collated materials and labelled them for me. Sometimes this participation was more meaningful than at others times. This depended on how fully we had reached an understanding of the purpose of the activity. The very act of letting them handle the tools of research furthered the possibility of that understanding. Even if very playfully, they were getting some sense of what it was like to be in the researcher or the observer's shoes, and this increased the daring of their questions. The boundaries within which they constructed this adult were changing, while the boundaries of what she considered children were also changing. Not only adult and child were reconstructed, but also the tools themselves and their use, underwent reconstruction. Much of this remained implicit.

Warren (2000: 127-129) reports on his experience of "inviting them in", particularly his surprise when a survey developed out of a classroom discussions was administered by the children to the rest of the school at lunch time in ways that highlighted differences between his and his students' interpretations of the activity. His initial response was to be struck "by the seeming impossibility of reading the response sheets in any meaningful fashion" and to be frustrated that the children had not followed simple instructions. This response, and the subsequent reflections it triggered about research assumptions and boundaries, echo my own experience.

A story diary activity that grew out of a discussion period resulted in a similar array of unexpected responses. We had been talking about the different sources of stories, the TV, radio, parents, church, and I asked if they would be willing to record the different stories they find throughout the week and the different places they

³⁰ Some of the activities recommended include providing tape recorders for participants to tape themselves and their friends in conversation, which they can then listen to, read transcripts of and comment upon; having students' devise and administer their own questionnaire about a topic they generate (Shuman 1986), sharing dialogue journals or diaries; introducing ethnographic and folklore collection techniques (including mapping and diagramming) and helping them do a study within their own community (Bloome et al 1998).

found them. One diligent girl went home and copied the table of contents out of the sole children's book in the house, another related a folk tale her grandmother told her as well as describing the process of collecting it as folklore, a third started creating a story of her own. Each of these responses was valid to the child but not what I had expected. I came to realise how little sense or meaning adult led activities hold for children. I also came to see differently their attempts to work some meaning into these activities or how they rework the activity towards a more pleasurable activity and the worth of that pleasure as meaning. Frustration turns to amazement when one's bounded systems can be opened out to different possibilities of representation. The logic of my interpretation of the instructions no longer seemed so infallible. Uncovering just how many different ways a description of a suggested activity can be interpreted had important implications for the overall interpretative project of the study.

Warren concludes that "Rosaldo's argument that our lives involve disconnections and discontinuities as well as norms and rules, and that it is the strategies for dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty that are important to the processes of self-making in cultural borderlands" (2000: 129). This argument is also relevant to the situations I experienced. How children tolerate a lack of sense, attribute cause or blame, how this impinges on their understanding of their agency or enables them to construct alternative identities for agency were all themes that became more explicit when I engaged in constructing activities with them, rather than only observing those other adults led.³¹

CHANGING VS. KNOWING

Participatory research with children or adults has its risks. Most obvious is the risk that in becoming involved in designing and implementing activities one lessens one's ability to step back and observe. Or put another way, it changes what one observes and how. One does not have as much attention to devote to taking in people's responses as one is spending more time focusing on one's responsibilities in the role one is taking in the activity. More problematic is the possibility that one comes to

³¹ In the survey of child participatory research I have come across instances of research more inclusive than mine, or perhaps more intrusive, such as the use of attached mikes. I used the technology that at the time I felt I could negotiate the use of within the ethical bounds I understood. The use of video would have enriched the observations I could have drawn upon but would have intensified all the issues that tape recording raised.

enact what one has come to criticise, ultimately making that critique harder to do. Particularly in an education setting, one's actions are interpreted as furthering the aims set there. Conversely, by bringing in new activities one implies a new stance or a further intrusion of the "development process". There is the danger that people's attempts to accommodate the changes that one is making in normal power dynamics, significantly alter the very themes and processes one has come to explore. The changes one makes to construct the terms of discussion change the process of then engaging in that discussion.

In any case, it is not possible to take no stance at all. As alluded to earlier, children are very adept at reading faces and stances. If one does not want to be interpreted as a thorough supporter of the status quo, one has to demarcate, if subtly, one's differences. Torren's take on ethnography's project is helpful in expediting one's way through this dilemma:

Ethnographic analysis is self-consciously historical and comparative. It follows that it should be able to recognise that continuity and change are aspects of a single phenomenon and to show how ideas are transformed in the very process of their constitution. (1996: 111)

It is not as if children's and teachers' attitudes towards received northern educational structures are not changing anyway. Nevertheless, the stance that acknowledges continual change should not be one that abdicates any responsibility for how one's actions affect in what way that change occurs. All changes are not equal.

As with interpretative interactionism, so too with collaborative action processes, once it fed into the dynamic of research relationships it continued to play a part through the stages of reflection and representation.

FIELDWORK STAGE THREE: REFLECTIVE INTERVIEWS

Rather than serving as a stimulus having a predetermined and presumably shared meaning a question may more usefully be thought of as part of a circular process through which its meaning and that of its answer are created in the discourse between interviewer and respondent as they try to make continuing sense of what they are saying to each other.
(Mischler 1986: 53)

As field research moved into its final stages, I engaged with teachers and students in a third way. This phase of reflection included individual interviews with students in which they were invited to contribute to the analysis of the themes explored in the group. Participants chose whether to be interviewed and if by themselves or with a friend, or in the case of one group, with as many peers as possible. During the interview we re-listened to tapes, looked at photographs or the drawing and writing that had resulted from activities. This phase overlapped with the collaborative group one, as often the group listened to the tape of their discussion immediately afterwards and commented upon it. They also looked at the transcripts as I developed them.

The interview setting gave me another vantage point from which to understand their perspectives (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 18, 107-113). However, I cannot describe it as the culmination of a process of increased power sharing. Often children read the activity as requiring much more standard school behaviour of them than our previous activities. Although I had hoped the interviews would be an opportunity for them to evaluate me or my analysis, broaching the topic of "evaluation" was often interpreted as involving an evaluation of them. It was inconceivable sometimes that I actually wanted them to evaluate me or my understanding of what I had learned. Particularly in the schools where power imbalances between the community and the larger society were pronounced, the very mention of interview seemed to signal to them that they were being tested or perhaps even interrogated. I could read this happening on their faces and adjusted my interaction to draw on earlier rapport.³² I also found more informal ways to broach the same topics with more success.³³ Conversely, in the more affluent school children interpreted interviews in a more positive light, associating it with radio or TV interviews of celebrities. They seemed to enjoy being cast in a role of importance and authority. The interviews were often divided into two halves, when I asked if they had any questions of me, this often opened exploration on different terms. As I became aware of this I asked the question earlier in the time we had scheduled to talk together.

³² In a situation like this, the distinction that Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:113) make between reflexive and standardised questions becomes most apparent.

³³ I also asked the entire class to do an evaluation activity, adapted from an earlier exercise we had constructed together, and asked for a written evaluation from the teachers with whom I worked.

The construct of interview also proved problematic for one of the head teachers. Whenever I approached her for an interview, she would redirect the conversation towards other tasks that were piling up, and would physically begin to interact with them, rather than turn body or eye contact towards me. Two thirds of the way through my stay, I changed tack, and took to asking one or two questions at lunch time in the midst of other conversation. This was a covert tactic, and diminished the extent to which I could claim the research was collaborative. Yet, in another sense it could be seen as exactly the kind of collaboration that was workable in the situation, addressing some of my questions in a format that fitted in better with her schedule, rather than threatening her with a discourse situation which had negative connotations of some kind. Nevertheless the issue of permission was avoided rather than resolved.

UNDERLYING APPROACH:
NARRATIVE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The less degree of structure in the interview, the more complex the performance required from the interviewer.
(Robson 1993: 242)

ANALYSING THE DISCOURSE OF NARRATIVES

Below I want to discuss the detailed process of listening. However, this process played an important role in previous stages of work. Interviews with teachers and parents began much earlier, whenever the opportunity presented itself. Group discussion and activities were also recorded on tape, giving me a large set of discourse to analyse in detail. The table below details the different kinds of materials I collected that fed into the discourse analysis process

Figure 4.3: Discourse Sources

Relationship	Kinds of materials
Teacher with student	Field notes
Student with student	Tapes, field notes, products of activities
Student with researcher	Tapes, field notes, subsequent correspondence
Teacher with researcher	Tapes, field notes, written evaluation, subsequent correspondence

Discourse analysis has been described as being at once inductive and deductive, like someone who is simultaneously creating and solving a problem (Emmerson, Fretz and Shaw 1995: 144).³⁴ Gill (1996) explains there is no set process that one can plug data into, run and have answers. As ethnographers say of their work, Gill believes you, “develop an eye for it,”—one that it becomes difficult to shut or switch off.

There were several ways of listening in order to answer the questions set out in the research design. Some points were taken from the listening guide, quoted in Taylor, Gilligan and Sullivan (1995), such as:

- listen for overall shapes of narrative, first impressions, recurring themes, contradictions, images, track intellectual and emotional responses to teller and story
- listen to I-statements, how the narrator speaks about self in story
- listen for contrapuntal voices, different ways of voicing the relational world such aspects as I-voice, you-voice, or psychological markers.
- listen for signs of dissociation, confusion within story, missing pieces, repeated or vague language, phrases, like “I don’t know”, emotional absences, signals that the story may allude to more than is depicted, or deeper layers of meaning that need contextualisation to be understood.

³⁴ See also Brady (1993: 253).

The interplay between representation and lived experience through the course of research was vital to watch, as the examination of the contested processes of popular culture in the theory chapter emphasised (Hall 1980; Tomlinson 1991). Lived experience became representation, and representation became another's lived experience from which they then made other representations (Holstein and Gubrium 1998: 146). As with the more broad based observations of ethnography, it was important to track whose suggestions got taken up and how, and to note what sources they drew on, be they from a particular folkloric tradition, a school authority, popular culture, local experience in the community or some mixture or hybrid containing several elements.

Before this comparative work between tape and script could be done, I needed to pay exact attention to several para-linguistical factors and make decisions on how to represent these in the transcript. Several discourse and narrative analysts employ an approach to transcription, which assumes an underlying poetical structure to oral speech. In order to do this one must bracket the received wisdom pounded into ones head through succeeding levels of education that people communicate in full sentences. If one listens closely, one quickly discovers that rarely when people speak do they pause only at the end of sentences, or even where grammar would require a comma. Rather, people communicate in thought phrases, and use repetition and conjunctions and appositives to shape intended communication far more than we are habituated to believing.

The transcript style chosen sets out speech in phrases as they were spoken (Chafe 1990), in accordance with the rhythm in which they were spoken, like lines in free verse poetry. I follow Gee's (1986), and Riessman's (1993) example in using this format in order to help reveal the underlying sense structures and patterns at work within and in contrast to conventional grammatical structure. Through their various approaches, narratives, which at first reading seem disjointed or chaotic, reveal very interesting layers of meaning and structure. As Michaels' (1986) work points out, assuming that this underlying structure is present can help one verify one's interpretation of underlying sense structures with its author. This step of verification is an important one, since, without it, the researcher may create very interesting patterns that bear no relation to the author's intent. However, without this work, one may have a different kind of misinterpretation, one that does not give the author enough credit. Denzin bases his work on the assumption that narratives

always have an internal logic that makes sense to the narrator.³⁵ The two insights to bring to my research process, then, are these:

- Just because I can make some sense of a narrative does not mean that I have arrived at the intended sense.
- As long as I am not finding any sense in the text, it can be fairly safely assumed that it is not the narrator who is illogical or talking rubbish, but my understanding which is lacking.

Using this kind of phrasing also helps reveal how speakers shape coordinated speech or turn taking. There are strong differences in how children understood turn, used rhythms of speech to interrupt, and to what degree these interruptions were accepted. The more attention I gave to trying to represent the cut and thrust of their dialogical performances, the more appreciative I became of the multiple meanings and intentions being expressed, and the skilful timing used to achieve them. Given the importance of “utterance” to Bakhtin’s analysis of dialogue (Bakhtin 1981: 279; Medvedev/Bakhtin 1978: 219-228), these interactions were extremely important to map.³⁶ Indeed, in reviewing transcripts I found I wanted a map or a picture of the soundscape. Transcripts, in comparison to the live sound, were very diminished. Hardly were they skeletons, more like, as Cruikshank (1999) refers to them, fossils.

Unlike Conversation Analysis, which seeks to prove underlying patterns or rules at work in the structure of discourse that reflect or are indicative of larger societal structures, my task was not to prove anything about structures, but to appreciate

³⁵ This is more widely understood in discourse analysis as the “principle of cooperation” or “assumed coherence” in which all statements (including silence) are assumed to make sense in terms of some context which is either predefined or is introduced by the statement (Grice 1975, 1978; McDermott 1986: 206). Gee remarks on this assumption of coherence that humans, “move to sense the way certain plants move to light” (1999: 79).

³⁶ Kent paraphrases Bakhtin’s argument that, “no element of communicative interaction except the utterance can account for our ability to employ a language in order to interpret the other’s language, and the boundaries of the utterance are outlined by the pauses between communicants that allow the other to speak.” And again: “Unlike the sentence or other transformational unit, the utterance takes its identity from the dialogic-like interchanges between a communicant and the other that occur only within living language” (1991: 289).

how they might contribute to students' on-going interpretative processes.³⁷ It was vital to draw on the various other sources of information that I had gained through the other field techniques in order to carry out discourse analysis. In closely examining transcripts I drew on my observations of their other interactions in different and similar situations. As I read the transcript I relied on much that is difficult to capture on paper, body movements, pitch, stress and several other aspects of shaping words, accentuated as well by gesture and facial expression. By the end of fieldwork I had come to a very embodied understanding of the conversations which I have since had to dis-embodify in order to present in academic discourse. The process has given me pause to wonder if the frustrations I have experienced are somewhat related to, a faint echo perhaps, of the frustration with which some of the participants struggle everyday.

A CASE IN POINT

I want to illustrate how participant observation experience of the earlier stage of research came into play in the interpreting process by examining a particular piece of discourse. In the first instance I present the raw transcript for the reader to engage with. I then present an interpretation of it made without contextualising information, and finally my own, which draws on several different kinds of contextualisation.

This excerpt is from a lengthy review of movie action scenes which boys at the Jamaican school had seen on video. The passage below is the transition into their vivid depiction of such shows. The conversation started when I told the boys about a fairy tale that a group of girls had earlier re-told to me as if it happened here in their community. I then asked if they remembered any tales. They recounted first "Beauty and the Beast", and then more vividly, "Rapunzel"—her long strong hair having very much impressed them. After having conveyed the image of Rapunzel's long hair, they filled in information of secondary importance, at which point one of the boys made a strong assertion in contrast to the action of the parents in the story:

Hosea: Dem a Take away dem

³⁷ For an overview of the differences between Conversational Analysis (CA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) see Van Dijk (1999) and related articles in the same issue which he edits.

First baby dem ave first baby
 baby girl
 Hosea: First born baby
 B: hmm
 Sel: Im take em away, miss Samuel: take em away
 Daniel: Bet you im Take away NuTTin miss
 ?: You ear dem man? Dem big
 Dem Baby (ch: Baby) Dem baby a rue Nehemiah:-----
 witch a mudder -----window a bark you know
 And im fast asleep over der
 And elp me win back
 B: Would you give your baby away?
 Chorus: No miss no miss
 B: Even if it was a witch? Daniel:---
 Samuel: im asleep miss (rapid to get it all in) im asleep take away-
 -
 B: You wouldn't give your baby away?
 Chorus: No miss!! Samuel: No Miss! All right
 B: Well what would you do instead?
 ?: hmm
 B: what if the witch came to your door
 What would you do?
 ?: mm Hold de door Samuel: Miss!
 Daniel: Fight
 Lick im down Samuel: Miss, we never/all right
 Samuel: all right
 Miss me asleep a bed
 say 'ere a bed, (motions to use room as bedroom, other boys get up and
 demonstrate with him the logistics of the house)
 Miss Lie down dere
 Hosea: miss dis a baby bed Samuel: a baby bed
 (from other side of room:)
 Daniel: Dis a baby bed right ere so?
 And your a bedroom dere so
 And de witch jus'
 Pull de window --
 B: So the witch is gonna steal the baby?
 Hosea: Yeh er a steal
 B: out the window
 Samuel: Yes miss
 B: Would you let someone steal your baby?
 Chorus: No miss!
 Samuel: Miss Miss! If a-
 Daniel: Ere a reach down ere same way
 Say im take away first baby girl

 Samuel: If, If dem if dem
 A tief it make it³⁸--

³⁸ "a" stands in for meaning parts of speech in Patwa in this phrase it is a verb participle, as in the Old English use, i.e. "a maying we will go".

Mi naw gonna know

Daniel: mi naw gonna know

Samuel: Dey naw gonna foolish to tell me miss

You see if we tell it,

All right

Maybe if dey a car a broke in with gun

And den dem a kill me and take away

Daniel: and ah so

Daniel: when some time a man wi a money

One place

Im daughter come from foreign

Whole heap a money

Someone go dere

In de Nnnight

Wid Gunnn

And take away money

And box up er mann—

.....

... (some confusion and I ask Daniel to tell story again)

.....

. Come from foreign you know

Like yaww me man

Come from foreign

Yah me daughter you know

Come from foreign

Wid lots of money

And new role

And you see im like

Dem just come

h

mi don' know how much

whole heap

B: So you would steal money from the foreigner

Who had all the money?

Daniel: naw so, me prefera beg im

Hosea: Ask im--

Nehemiah: and in

de middle jus' steal

Samuel: you see one day me a watch a show

You see

A one man went out der wida girl miss

And de girl naw want im miss

snigger

And and im walk out der wi di girl

And de girl naw business wid im

E, e, e, kept er girl

This passage comes at a pivotal point in a group discussion. From this point on the boys in the discussion reveal a great deal about themselves that would make them vulnerable to censure and punishment. It is one of the most in-depth disclosures the group decides to make over the entire course of my work with them. Appreciative of this, as I was, at the time I left, I still did not understand what had triggered this disclosure. What was it I had signalled or demonstrated that meant they decided to

trust me with the information that followed? I realised there was something important about this text that I just wasn't getting. For that reason I showed it to a group of researchers across various disciplines who were interested in discourse analysis. Many seemed at a loss for how to interpret it at all, or perhaps were genuinely offended by the content. The one reading that did emerge was in stark contrast to the interpretation I was trying to work out. That interpretation stressed the number of times I repeated variations of the phrase, which is first offered as, "would you give your baby away?" This phrase was read with the stress falling on the word "you" and "your", and the boys' reactions to it were interpreted as trying to deflect an accusation, which they finally do by switching the topic to something completely unrelated as a way of closing the topic. Looking at the text by itself, I realised that their interpretation is the same as I would probably have given it, if I had come across the text without having any other contact with the experience represented by it. At this point I realised how much unpacking I had to do, if I was to make intelligible what I had experienced.

I do not think the boys experienced my question as an accusation but as genuine curiosity. I first ask the question in response to one boy's vigorous assertion.

Daniel: Bet you im Take away NuTTin miss

Daniel's assertion comes in a crowded section of dialogue with overlapping contributions, and is only half-audible. The conversation up to this point has been playful, and has established them as authorities on local culture. My repeated question is an attempt to ask a question appropriate to the context. At first I want to know how they are interpreting *witch*, if it has any local validity. But they don't seem to make a connection between it and *obeah*³⁹—that's not how *obeah* works. As they act out how a baby could be taken, I realise the focus for the story for them is on a different kind of activity, not giving but taking, stealing. I keep trying different versions of my questions, and they keep correcting me until I get the verb right. That they don't take the "you" as a personal affront is signalled in several ways. They don't switch back into Standard Jamaican English, or stony silence, as they often do when misinterpreted or reprimanded by their class teacher. With their bodies they lean into the conversation and closer to me, until they start acting out what they

³⁹ The local term for a synthesis of African derived spiritual practices adapted to the specific context of the Caribbean.

mean, which is an even more demonstrative way of involving themselves in the conversation, not a way of backing out of it. As they act out the theft scenario, they appropriate the "you". First the narrator talks about the bedroom that the baby is going to be stolen from as his, "Miss me a sleep a bed". As the action unfolds, the "you" migrates. I become the "you":

Samuel: and you're a bedroom dere so.

They put me in the scene, telling me where I would be in the house. Their tone throughout is helpful, it doesn't sound like they are throwing back an insult. When I ask the question again I'm not stressing the pronoun you. In fact I rush through the first part of the sentence and slow down and give emphasis to the word "steal".

B: Would you let someone steal your baby?

But this version isn't right either; the question shouldn't include the word "let". There is more to social relations than I am yet taking into consideration in the way I phrase this question. They now deconstruct that little word to unpack the complexity of dynamics implied. Samuel begins to articulate interior motivation in a quite astute judgement on local relations. What one knows or doesn't know determines what one can "let" happen.

Samuel: If If dem if dem
A tief it make it--
Mi naw gonna know

Daniel: mi naw gonna know

Samuel: Dey naw gonna foolish to tell me miss

No one would be foolish enough to tell you out right they were going to take your child, they would go about it by different means, unless—and this is where a new connection is made and the villain in Rapunzel begins to be compared to the villains as constructed in the Jamaican media. As Samuel begins to explain what kind of power you would have to have to openly threaten to take a baby, Daniel narrates a specific local instance of it.

Samuel: Maybe if dey a car a broke in with gun
And den dem a kill me and take away
Daniel: when some time a man wi a money
One place

Daniel: and ah so

A border has been crossed from remote fairy tales, through general local dynamics, to specific local activity, and it is a threshold one of the boys leads the way through. Listening to the tape several times to try to pin point what the transcript misses out that changes how it can be interpreted, I realised there are several things Daniel signals with the tonality of his voice.⁴⁰ The first phrase with which he sets the stage for the scenario quickly rises to a high pitch, sustained through most of the phrase, falling slightly, but not back to what could be considered the tonic note of unstressed speech.

Daniel: When some time a man wi a money

The other times that I have heard this tonal pattern in Jamaica stand out for me as being unique to this community's repertoire. Often this is the way a final contextual bit of information will be added to an argument or a story in such a way as to reverse or completely change how one could have interpreted events. It is the key piece, the vital link, often ending with the phrase "you know"--implying the wise do know. What I am referring to here is what the literature on the discourse analysis of intonation (Ladd 1986, 1996) refers to as "a tune".⁴¹ What Daniel reveals is the real situation which people worry about, not witches stealing babies, but dons with guns stealing and beating and disgracing. When I understand the story, I ask what their role in it might be. In various conversations to date they have told me they admire bad men and aspire to be one.

⁴⁰ Winchman's review of work on prosody focuses only on European research, relies mainly on scripted or formally structured speech occurrences, and does not address different uses of prosody across different cultural contexts. She notes differences between generative researchers who concentrate on intonation's use to convey grammatical structure and contrasts this to pragmatic linguistics who asserts that "interactional and pragmatic needs play a primary and formative role rather than a residual one in the organisation of talk" (1999: 124). Her own view is that, "the most elusive aspect of intonation is its 'attitudinal' function. At the same time I believe it is the richest area of intonational meaning" (1999: 144). One of the most significant difficulties in interpreting 'attitudinal' intonation is the interplay between implied and inferred meaning. This issue is very much at play not only in this particular passage but also throughout the entire process of discourse analysis. Gee also notes the importance of pitch and stress in shaping the intention of utterances (1999: 103-104).

⁴¹ Historically, the increased importance of intonation in the Jamaican creole context has been noted (Brathwaite 1971). One of the most important differences between Patwa and SJE is the marked differences in intonation and prosody. When asking children about the difference between SJE and Patwa the examples they frequently gave varied not so much in grammar or vocabulary, as they did in the use of prosody.

My "you" up to now has signalled a general you. At this point when I ask, "would you steal in the night?" Daniel's response again opens up the social complexity. He would "prefer to beg me something". However, the other boys overlap his statement, revealing there are multiple strategies: you can ask by day and try a different tactic by night. That this is volunteered indicates to me, again, that at least this speaker is not interpreting my remarks as accusation but as an honest attempt to understand. At this point Samuel makes a bid to recover the floor that Daniel took from him by telling the local theft story. Samuel echoes the same intonation Daniel used, signalling again that his story will throw light on the discussion to date, or will imply commentary about it. As it turns out, the Rapunzel scenario is not very plausible at all. It doesn't strike the same chord of societal anxiety as it does here in Britain. The media doesn't latch on to cases of missing children. What is of great concern, voiced from pulpits, quoted in newspaper articles, in yards and kitchens, is the safety of young women. There is a great deal of concern that they will be "stolen" by "sugar daddies" or "bad men". Samuel tells one such scenario, and every other boy in the group matches it. As they do, I feel myself pulled through a threshold. Up till now in the conversation my questions are peppered regularly throughout the exchanges, I am playing a fairly large part in determining the direction the conversation moves in, at this point momentum is transferred to them, and I listen without question or comment.

Until challenged by my colleagues, I did not hear the causal link the boys were making in their intonation. If I really wanted to know what people worried about being stolen, and in some bumbling way, my repeated attempts at getting the question right have convinced them that I did, then they will take me to what is home ground, to the experiences and scenarios that do engage their imaginations and relate to their predicament and identities.

I am not saying that there is no element of accusation in my question. Clearly the conversation is circling around issues of shame and defence, but in a sparring sort of way that has its own appeal. In a way, it accepts their terms of engagement, is less prissy and correct, and therefore in a tacit way signals acceptance. There are important gender differences that are at play in how boys distinguish between play fighting and real threats.⁴²

⁴² Danley and Baker (1998) conclude that, "conflict is not seen as dysfunctional, but as being an inclusive act of masculine socialisation."

In this passage the four factors (express curiosity, suspend judgement, invite their curiosity, remain flexible and creative) that France, Bendelow and Williams (2000) recommend come into play. Much of this is carried in the tone of the conversation. It is through tone that the suspension of judgement and flexibility are signalled. The tone conveys not accusation but curiosity, and in doing so invites their curiosity, inviting them to see strange as familiar and the familiar as strange. It is surprising how richly the story of Rapunzel is mined for themes and metaphors over the course of the entire conversation, though on the face of it, the story might seem to have no bearing whatsoever on their reality.⁴³

The passage also highlights the danger and difficulties in reducing spoken language to text. Key to my interpretation is hearing the intonation of the pivotal remark. It also relies heavily on a reading of body language and gestures, and being able to compare these responses to situations in which the participants were responding to accusations either by peers or by teachers. My persistence means they have the opportunity to keep contributing contextualising information to contrast between story and lived experience, until we have reached a level of in depth translation. The overall flow of the conversation is important to relate. To do so throughout this paper would require pages and pages of transcript or requires the reader to trust the condensing, paraphrasing and editing that I do to present conversations in a more condensed form.

NARRATIVE WITHIN A DISCURSIVE FRAMEWORK

Expectations about the shape and position of narratives had to be rethought in light of discourse analysis. I found narratives do not occupy some discrete position, set off in a characteristic shape, but are very much interwoven into the conversation and enactment of people's lives. It is in assessing the conversation's relations to wider enactments of culture that narratives emerge. Fluid narratives of the kind Warren (2000) depicts, have to do with "negotiating borderlands", negotiating a changing identity in relation to formal education, family and community constructs.

Rapport claims that,

³⁸ If there is a definition of creole it is to do with exactly this taking inappropriate or disparate texts and practices and making them fit, giving them literally an off-beat emphasis and thereby making them suit.

Narrative may be understood as stories people tell about themselves and their worlds. The medium of their narrational telling may vary (from words to images to gestures to routine behaviours) but what is invariant is the characteristic of narratives to propagate a meaningful sequence across time and space . . . In a world in motion, narratives provide for the world traveller—whether anthropologist or informant—a place cognitively to reside and make sense, a place to continue to be. (Rapport 2000: 74)⁴⁴.

While advocating that development research pay increasing attention to narratives, Stephen cautions that several steps need to be taken into account:

- that the focus is not excessively on the exotic or powerful,
- that sufficient attention is paid to cognitive dimensions of the account and
- that narrative “deep structures” are given equal importance as performance features (1994: 35).

The diverse sources that children draw on to create narratives, but particularly the increasing influence that broadcast media has in children's lives and the intense rapid visual literacy demanded by it, mean their narratives are taking different shapes and structures than those used to analyse narrative in literary (Moldofsky 1983) or even linguistical terms (Labov 1972). The influence of the format of video games and cartoons in the two Scottish settings and the powerful image-based poetry of Dancehall in the Jamaican setting meant that in all three settings a Creole process of hybrid forms confronted the process of narrative analysis with unique challenges in every setting.⁴⁵

POST FIELD METHODS: CONSULTATIVE REPRESENTATION

The interpretive undertaking thus becomes the practice
of actively debating and exchanging points of view with our informants.
It means placing our ideas on a par with theirs,

⁴⁴ See also Riessman (1993: 2).

⁴⁵ Manning, and Cullum-Swan (1996: 258) examine the differences between linear narrative readings of cultural constructs and a more fractured episodic semiotic reading of popular culture, taking as their example the cultural construct of a McDonald's fast food outlet. Although I do not agree with their association of the more linear reading with interactionist ethnography, the article holds many important insights.

testing them not against predetermined standards of rationality
but against the immediate exigencies of life.

(Jackson 1989: 124 quoted in Schwandt 1996)

WRITING UP, OR WRITING SIDEWAYS?

There were several considerations to be taken into account in the last stages of research. Interviews began the process of analysis; representation in written text completed it. Teachers, community members and in some instances children were shown various drafts of transcripts and texts. Nevertheless, I was left to make many decisions about how to represent what I had come to understand with them. In advocating a very collaborative approach similar to the one I take, Rampton (1992: 58) nevertheless notes, that even if research is both with and for participants, it can be greatly enhanced by a stage of research conducted away from participation. Rampton notes that several months' reflection on social networks, sociolinguistic attitudes, naturalistic interaction and educational discourse, laid the groundwork for the feedback work with informants that he was then able to initiate with them by presenting the results of that period of reflection (1992: 44). His analysis of his own research process impacts my research design in two ways. Firstly, it cautioned me about the extent of analysis I myself was able to bring to participants for reflection while part of the field experience, and it challenged me to think of ways to maintain some mechanism or options for feedback once I retreated into a period of writing up.

Throughout the following chapters I have tried to leave analysis open, for the readers own dialogic response. The analysis is open ended also out of respect for the response of those who appear in the analysis, whom the analysis most closely touches, who were my counterparts in the dialogic research process, who still see from their perspective things I cannot from mine.

TURNING THE STORY INSIDE OUT

Yet, the converse of this is also true. Crucial to representing research is the ability to re-externalise the understandings that have become internalised, or embodied. There is a bridge that one has to construct at the same time one walks upon it, to allude to the puzzle metaphor given previously. This entails regaining a sense of what it is not to know what I know, to shift what I know in an embodied or integrated way, into

an articulate way, dealing to some extent with the same dilemmas and frustrations the boys do on an on-going basis. To the extent that I have been able to take their perspective, I become similarly frustrated by the lack of recognition of their expression of meaning or by a lack of means to translate from their means of expression to those deemed acceptable in formal education. This process entails two steps, first making sense of my own experience and my records of it, secondly, making sense of this to others. An intermediary stage of the written account takes the form of an internal dialogue, in which there were more questions typed in capital letters, some of these remain as section headings.

In the interest of transparency I portray my own voice, aware, as Charmaz and Mitchel are, that to do so signals a stance in the evolution of academic representation:

Scholarly writers have long been admonished to work silently on the sidelines, to keep their voices out of the reports they produce, to emulate Victorian children: be seen (in the credits) but not heard (in the text). (1997:193)

This approach is no longer acceptable if one accepts Brodkey's argument that critical narrators must be "narrators whose self consciousness about ideology makes it necessary for them to point out that all stories, including their own, are told from a vantage point, and to call attention to the voice in which the story is being told" (1987: 71). Brodkey also finds suspect anthropologist's use of the present tense. "There is an unmistakable and awkward similarity between the customary use of the ethnographic present (in which ethnographers represent data as at once immediate and irremediable) and the use of the historical present in colonial travel narratives (in which explores reported their experiences of exotic peoples)." As will be evident in the following pages, I struggle with the ethnographer's eternal present. It is difficult for me to remember or portray in the past tense. When I summon up an experience in order to re-create it for the reader it begins to play in my head in the present tense, not the past. It also feels odd to suggest to the reader to imagine it in the past tense. Yet, to write in the present tense is to collude with the western project of objectifying those observed, setting them in amber as if their lives were not continuing, as indeed they are. As I write this, many of those I spent time with no longer exist. They are no longer primary school students, having graduated. The important distinction between my use of the present tense and the use that Brodkey (1987) quite rightly criticises is that I do not use the third person, historical present, erasing myself from the scene, but rather, the first person present.

I have to deal with the issue of representing Patwa and the political and social significance of that choice given current controversies about it. I am guided by a certain young man's observation about Patwa. His experience of Patwa is not as a separate language but as a relationship. My decision about how to represent Patwa is based on the relationships in which I learned it. I write words as I saw participants write them although I am aware of, and in agreement with, Carolyn Cooper's (2000) case for a more thorough application of phonetical spelling.

Throughout fieldwork I pushed myself to examine and experiment with my own linguistic choices. Denzin (1996) advocates interpretation that "makes jazz" and cites as exemplars writing that pushes the boundaries, creates new relations between symbols, and thereby reveals new meanings, and nuances, literally creating a fresh "landscape". However, these ideals must be held in tension with a need for transparency and responsibility back to co-participants in research, producing something recognisable, and, therefore, valuable to them. Warren (2000: 161) makes a similar point in relation to the participatory work with children. In the Jamaican case particularly, there is a strong case for borrowing from poetry, as it is a more, not less, accessible form⁴⁶.

I do not believe I ever "gave" the informants voice. They already have their voices and chose within constraints how to use them, including within these pages generously allowing me to borrow them, for what they trust are meaningful and respectful ends. In return they have my permission to borrow what of my voice, my stories, that they find useful. My sense is we will make different uses of what we have borrowed from each other. However, not as different as some would have it:

Because theory--the word itself says so is a spectacle, which can only be understood from a viewpoint away from the stage on which the action is played out, the distance lies perhaps not so much where it is usually looked for, in the gap between cultural traditions, as in the gulf between two relations to the world, one theoretical, the other practical. (Bourdieu, quoted in Marcus 1998: 397)

I would not even want to say my relation to the world is theoretical and those I researched practical. However, the ways in which we theorise about the world are

⁴⁶ See Richardson, who, through his poetic representation of field work, offers a different way of seeing, "not a seeing that penetrates beneath the world of everyday to an underlying structure or core but a seeing that lingers on the surface, a seeing that has a roundness to it, a seeing that has a patience to it, a seeing that allows the lived-in world of people's lives to come forth" (1998: 21).

different, mine tending to be more abstract and theirs more embedded. Henry's (2000: xi) introduction to Caribbean philosophy points out "Caribbean philosophy has been carefully embedded in the practices of nonphilosophical discourses almost to the point of concealment."

FACING BOTH WAYS

Mischler (1990: 422) argues for a validity based on exemplars similar to those described by Kuhn which prove themselves to be trustworthy. In his terms, a study will find its validation in the answer to these questions, will its finding bear weight? Will researchers and practitioners find them trustworthy enough to act upon them? It makes sense to me that studies of embedded social practices earn their validity by equally embedded responses.

CONCLUSION

In summary then, I spent two periods of participant-observation experience and discourse collection in Scotland and Jamaica, comparing findings within and between the two settings in order to better understanding the coping skills both sets of children are developing to deal with their divergent realities which are nevertheless subject to common dynamics of globalisation. The process was one of comparing the differing cultural resources and constraints and how these are used and interpreted in the differing settings, using an Interactional Sociolinguistical framework. Through a comparison process like triangulation, or as Richardson (1994: 522) more appropriately terms it crystallisation, the different elements of the research design work to critique the norms and assumptions of first world education paradigms as embodied both in myself as the researcher and in the many colonial constructs still operative within the third world setting.

The ultimate goal is to make reflexivity more accessible and meaningful to other practitioners and to increasingly practice reflexivity as a researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE: SHAPE SHIFTING STORIES IN THE ROUND: A TALE OF INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY IN A SCOTTISH CLASSROOM

INTRODUCTION:

The critical examination of just how language use, both limiting and enabling, works itself into the narratives, metaphors and discourses of children and teachers' every day lives begins in a school that confounds traditional categories of class. Elsewhere I have referred to it as the middle class Scottish school. However, the story is not so simple.

Throughout the chapter, themes that will reoccur in all the settings are introduced. The ways in which Bakhtinian concepts can be applied to an analysis of communication in and around the classroom gets its first airing. I start by briefly outlining the school-wide culture and its relation to the particular classroom culture of the primary five classes with which I worked. This overview sets the context for examining the specific class activities, which reveal important differences in the way children structure narratives and stories to suit differing purposes. First, I begin with the story of the school itself.

SCHOOL ETHOS FOR A CATCHMENT AREA STRADDLING A CLASS DIVIDE

The school with which this chapter is concerned is located in a particular part of a medium-sized city in Scotland's central belt that has seen a great deal of development and change over the last two decades. The school's catchment area straddles a mixture of working and middle class neighbourhoods. This school is situated near a major transportation hub of an inter-medial ring road for the city

and a major shopping centre. The school adjoins a large council-built housing estate that has become largely owner-occupied as a result of the divestment housing policy of the late 80s and early 90s. The enrolment of the school has nearly doubled in the last decade and has required creative use of existing space within the building and grounds. The school has an active student council, encourages a variety of cultural and community-oriented projects and interests, and, despite the increase in size, still maintains an ethos of concern and support for individual students, encouraging their potential through a positive discipline programme.

The deputy head of the school was able to give me some insight into these changes. As both a parent and a teacher, she had over fifteen years of experience at the school. It was not always as I saw it now. In the early 80s, despite its mix of catchment area, it was a working class school. Only the children from the council housing scheme attended school here. Those in private housing sent their children to private school or managed to get them accepted into the local council schools with better reputations nearer to the city centre.¹ In the mid 80s a number of things happened. This school was merged with another school. This enabled it to be renamed, and reconceptualised to appeal to a wider community and consumer base. The name it chose identified it with the private housing area of its catchment area. A large house-building boom in-filled much of the green belt in its catchment area, increasing the proportion of privately owned housing. The divestment housing policy actually meant an increasing percentage of council housing was converted into private housing. However, the deputy head attributes the greatest change to affect the school, its culture, and, concurrently, the mix of parents who sent their children to the school, as being the head teacher who oversaw these transitions. It was difficult to put into words exactly what this head teacher did, except that she was able to create a tremendous rapport with parents, with teaching staff and children. The deputy head was quite clear about the kind of culture this head initiated, which has been sustained through conscious effort by the management staff. Mrs. Armstrong² speaks at length about the importance of how everyday routines are enacted to sustain the rapport and ethos of respect in the school:

Mrs. Armstrong: The key word is valuing

¹ Parents with newly built private homes in the area that I interviewed in the course of fieldwork referred to this same history in justifying their decision to stick with the local school as "good enough", though it is a decade on from this demographic shift, indicating the ongoing importance of school reputation in this particular city.

² All names that refer to individuals at schools and their surrounding communities are aliases.

so, knowing who the children are (use of list of three to add
always smiling emphasis³)
always greeting the children--

we all go along the corridor
just in general
or specific children
children coming
--to and from the toilet, (list of three)
--from learning support,
--from the library,--
on an errand;
always greet them
"Good Morning" (cheery voice)

they really do, (list of three)
they like it
they do feel valued.

Mrs. Armstrong goes on to emphasise the strategies all of the management staff use to help each other learn each and every one of the children's names so that they greet them by name. The emphasis placed on this activity highlights the importance of individual worth and potential in the construct of childhood operative in this culture. As Mrs. Armstrong continues to speak about the overall culture of the school, the relationships of mutual respect between children and adults becomes more evident:

What we are aiming to do--
and it sounds terribly glib
it runs off the tongue
uhm
but when we say
educating the whole child
we're not just interested in their academic progress

when we say we want to teach every child to attain their potential
we mean the potential
of
the whole child.

Therefore

³ Mrs. Armstrong is a very effective speaker, though the focus of this thesis is not school management, it is interesting to note in passing the rhetorical structure of Mrs. Armstrong's portrayal of the school, using Hymes' (1996) and Gee's (1999) concepts of poetical construction of speech highlights. Hymes showed that there is a widespread pattern across cultures of using lists of three as a rhetorical device to add emphasis. Gee's analysis (Reissman 1992) of speech rather than denoting speech in sentences, following Chafe, analyses the word clusters of the actual pace of spoken speech, which more readily resemble the stanzas of free verse poetry. As with all transcript, I follow Gee's use of stanzas, and here in Mrs. Armstrong's speech note in brackets at the side her use of lists of three.

if it means language and maths (beginning of list of three interests
that extends over next
we have a duty three stanzas)
to explore that
to make sure they get the right curricular support;

but so too⁴
if their talent lies in
uhm
helping and aiding other people,
in organising and helping around the classroom.
We've got wonderful organisers
in this school
on a practical level;
and also children who can
logically work through steps
and stages,
come up with ideas to solve problems
about space.
uhm

It might be the child has a specific interest in
--or sport
We've got to tap into all that potential
(-----)
so it's a wide wide remit
to get this one family atmosphere
working
so that we all feel that we are part of the same team
and going in the same direction.

This is what our ethos has to be about
(.....)
--this is the way we behave (list of three ways)
--this is the way we treat children
--this is the way we treat each other

and do you know that our rules--?
when we say we respect each other
we're not just about/ talking about
the children respecting each other, (list of three respects)
it also includes the adults as well,
the adults have to respect each other
the adults have to respect the children.

The pedagogical philosophy portrayed here is one of mutuality. Referring back to the metaphors reviewed earlier, the culture depicted here is not linear but cooperative and diverse, suggesting an adventurous journey. This use of metaphors seems more in keeping with an Apollonian construct of childhood, (Jenks 1996),

⁴ Indicates stress speaker places upon word.

whose reason can be appealed to and whose diverse talents are to be encouraged. Jenks contrasts the Apollonian construct of the child to the Dionisyan⁵ construct of a wild or savage child who must be tamed, a construct more prevalent in the “working class” school examined later in the study. The metaphors for education that Mrs. Armstrong alludes to twice, in likening the school to a family or team, seems more in keeping with the Vygotskian emphasis on social mediation than with Piaget’s construct of learning (Smith, Dockerell, and Tomlinson 1997). However, one can also read into these remarks the influence of the new competitive discourse of education’s role in the global economy in which teamwork is the watchword. Mrs. Armstrong spoke about the shifts in her own educational philosophy over her teaching career in terms of progress and identified her approach as being very similar to Ms. Heath’s, the classroom teacher with whom I worked most closely in this school.

I spoke at length with Ms. Heath about her educational philosophy and approach, which was very much grounded in her own educational journey. The negative experiences of educational delivery, which did not keep learners’ needs uppermost, as well as more positive experiences contributed to her approach, which had respect for the learner and a conception of learning as a cooperative act at its heart. As the methodology chapter indicated, the design was meant to include aspects of collaborative action research, in which the professionals are consulted within a cyclical process of planning and implementation to meet both research and practitioner goals. It was Ms. Heath who actually took the lead in making this dynamic reality, encouraging my participation during class and in preparation to a degree I would not have thought possible to request. Many activities or ways of opening up communication, that in other settings I had to find other means and spaces to foster, were amply available in her classroom. Rather than having to distance myself from the teacher in order to gain children’s trust, my association with Ms. Heath facilitated the development of trust and opened communication with the children of the class. The level of respect, trust and, above all, enthusiasm that both Ms. Heath and the class granted me from the outset meant this setting held research challenges of a very stimulating variety.

⁵ Simpson (2000) incorporates Jenks’ contrasting constructions into her analysis of children’s embodied resistance to regulation as they make the transition from primary to secondary schooling.

BRIDGING THE CLASS DIVIDE: SPEECH GENRES IN ACTION

There was a strong sense of group identity as a class, which the teacher encouraged. They had developed a nickname for their class of which they were very proud. The mix of class backgrounds meant the children brought with them distinctly different language attitudes and practices which were open to re-negotiation and re-appraisal in both the formal and informal language exchanges that took place at school. The differences became evident in my excursions beyond the school walls with members of the class. Several of the children from the adjoining council estate were allowed to go home for lunch one day a week. Accompanying them on several occasions, I witnessed how they reclaimed a strong sense of agency in the interaction with the built environment in the walk to the shops where they had lunch at the bakery run by the grandmother of one of their peers. They spread out, examining the street for possibilities to display their physical prowess, be it a frozen puddle to slide across or railing to leap over or balance along. Without verbalising the dare, their actions signalled to each other to either match or outdo each other. Once they stepped out of the schoolyard, they were back in their territory. In contrast, the walk home with children who lived in private homes further away was quiet and watchful, with particular attention to traffic, or accompanied by a parent, both practices conveying a sense that the child on the way home ventured into foreign or dangerous territory.

Although Ms. Heath did not speak in terms of class distinctions, in introducing me to the class, she told me that there was a split between those in her class who were “scoffers” and those who were still “dreamers”. My own observation was that the scoffers and dreamers could not be divided along class lines. Scoffers and dreamers alike were encouraged to be playful about their attitudes and stances, rather than defensive of them. Together she and the class were constantly inventing new codes or signals in a spirit of playful conspiracy.

These opportunities to play with language and communication, to step outside its normal use and view it from different perspectives through playful activity, served to build up meta-linguistic awareness almost effortlessly. She confessed to “winding the class up” sometimes, or used other phrases to talk about the energy released in the classroom by playing with language, primarily through humour, often involving punning in exchanges that crossed mediums of expression from physical gestures, paralinguistic features, to word play. A few examples will illustrate.

At several points during my first visit to the classroom, Ms. Heath makes a coded gesture previously agreed with the class and they immediately burst into a gusty rendition of "Oh I do love to be beside the seaside!" which they were rehearsing for performance at assembly that week. My task through the remainder of the visit was to spot just exactly which gesture it was that set off this chorus, my befuddlement accenting their insider, expert status, effectively defusing any sense of intimidation my presence might have evoked.

On another visit I arrived just as the class was preparing to make their way the length of the building through crowded hallways being used as study centres. A stern reminder that it is crucial to keep noise to an absolute minimum so as not to disturb the many classrooms they would be passing might be the tactic some teachers would resort to, not Ms. Heath. In this week they had been listening to classical music about the planets and then creating their own responses, musical and pictorial. As a result, they had drawn space-scapes of what they heard, and had begun a critical thinking and co-operation skills activity based on a space adventure, in which they had to follow a map, make team decisions, and compose diary entries. Ms. Heath alluded to this alternative reality in giving her class instructions for hall conduct:

If you are attacked by an Andron or by an Asteroid smile in the hall. If an Andron talks to you, tell him you can't, just think it. They ear read minds. I met one at the weekend. Don't confuse P1s (primary one pupils) with Androns, they look similar. (Field Journal 1: 67)

Rather than telling them they must be quiet, she engaged their imaginations and invited them to participate in discourse in another dimension. The result was that when they arrived, having made barely a squeak on their way through the hall, they are bursting to tell their stories of the various adventures that occurred en route. Her allusion to P1s gave this invitation a sophisticated twist; in effect, it made a side-long glance at the school's regulations for normality, and made the proffered departure from it, just their knowing secret, a conspiracy.

In setting the scene for the various changes in discourse to be analysed, I want to point out a few more ways in which Ms. Heath helped children explore communication across a variety of modes before focusing on how children respond to her. First, it is important to bring in an awareness of the wider cultural discourse beyond the school walls. Most of the children who feature in the transcript analysed had attended this school since nursery. Those from working class backgrounds

spoke of generations of extended family living in the neighbourhood. Children frequently spoke about parents' work, family holiday destinations and levels of hi-tech purchasing power (i.e. play stations, desk top computers, DVDs, etc.) as a way of positioning or comparing status. Many of the students confidently recounted friendship histories. The emphasis of these accounts was on friendship around activities and abilities, rather than on necessary alliances to fend off perceived enemies, although some of the boys' accounts of toy-fighting and World Wrestling Federation were combative. A gender divide was evident in playtime activities, although this was not strictly adhered to. Boys and girls acted out adventure scenarios together and joined in some running games. However, boys did dominate the football pitch, and girls' circles of chat or rehearsals of dance routines rarely included male participants. My work with this class came at a time when Pokemons were becoming part of children's vocabulary as well as making up a significant part of their inventory of prized possessions. Until recently, the preferred play genre had been World Wrestling Federation. On my first visit one enthusiastic boy drew out of his desk a wrestling doll and demonstrated for me that it could flip its arms.

Ms. Heath had harnessed or co-opted this enthusiasm by allowing the boys to express their embodied knowledge in the medium of plays, which they performed for the class in the moments they were settling down just after morning break. The amount of energy, enthusiasm and time children devoted to rehearsing these plays during break-time meant this activity had a far greater significance for the class than the time allotted to it in the classroom might first suggest. Throughout the year, Ms. Heath encouraged them to make the transition from playing in front of the class with very little consciousness of their audience to performing a play for the class that adhered to criteria for good acting, criteria, which was developed by the class through after performance feed back sessions. The first scenes I witnessed were chillingly like watching a video kick-boxing game being played: no plot, minimal dialogue, lots of violence and sound effects. By the following spring, although video fight scene scenarios were still present, the topic incorporated factual information gained during a project on Mary Queen of Scots, included dialogue approaching a scripted quality and involved a quite complicated plot. Through this compromise, vibrant intelligent boys had a status and an identity in class that they valued. They continued to identify with and invest their energies in the school agenda when they, otherwise, might very easily have begun the slide towards disinterest, and

disengagement. These sessions also allowed the class as a whole to consider a medium of expression, that of embodied knowledge⁶, as valid (Scott, Harris, Rothe 2001) that they may otherwise have dismissed. It is yet another threshold they had been invited to cross and, in so doing, gain yet a different perspective from which to examine and understand the possibilities of communication and the connections between experience, meaning and language.

ACTIVITIES IN SEARCH OF AGENCY

Although the picture that I have painted of this school is very positive, it is precisely the children's entitlement to express themselves in this classroom that enabled this impression to be deconstructed. Children's alternative preferences and perspectives emerge and indicate the narrative of this school is not quite, in Bakhtin terms, so monologic. Children were very willing to help me understand their world through a number of media. One of the exercises that I asked the children to do invited them to divide a circle up to represent how they usually spent their day⁷. It was not

⁶ Although there is not space to deal in depth with another class at the school, with which I also spent time, it is worth noting here that through a different route embodied knowledge was also acknowledged. The male teacher of this class drew on his own working class background to inform his teaching practice. He spoke with an unrepentant working class Scots accent and often bantered with his male students about rival football teams. Whilst his derogatory remarks about their choice of team may be seen as damaging to the boys' self esteem, these exchanges also brought into the school discourse an important arena of their life usually excluded. In these exchanges they were allowed to respond to their teacher in kind, levelling the usual power imbalance between teacher and pupil. It is also interesting to note, that this teacher rarely appealed to his position of authority when giving instructions or directions, but rather to the rational benefit to themselves, which again, can be seen to be a deliberate working through of political and social issues of a working class stance. However, this teacher had a rather rigid concept of creative writing. Rather than cooperating on activities of this kind in class, he handed over to me children to work with outside of class in the area of expressive arts. This gave rise to a different structure for working with the children. Their stories in the round were in smaller groups and were wilder, and more overtly addressed issues of power, deviance and violence. The gender differences in embodied learning in the out of class sessions were more striking. The boys' ability to plan by acting came to the fore. They exhibited what I can only call a kind of flocking ability. Fluid yet coordinated, they interpreted each other's actions to develop a coherent yet imaginative plot as well, if not better, than the group of girls did using notes and discussion. For the boys, speech, rather than signalling a coordination of activity, was an indication of a break down in cooperation, or was used as a decoration, or ornament.

⁷ This activity is very similar to many participatory research techniques developed for use with children in order to overcome the barrier to expression that reporting their

suggested they divide it as a clock or a pie, and, interestingly, different tables agreed roughly amongst themselves on differing representational formats. Of those that did divide their day into wedges, it is significant to note common presences and absences. The most predominant images children drew depicted themselves interacting with gameboys, computer games, and television. Their depiction of school was not as interactional. Several girls drew a smiling face labelled teacher to represent school time. One variation of this had the teacher saying in a speech bubble, " I know that you know," which is a quite pithy summation of the IRF (Initiation, Response, Feedback) school discourse routine. Many girls and most boys tended to represent the time they spent at school with a picture of the school, a rectangle with smaller rectangles inside it, ostensibly windows, but also resembling an overview of the oblong classroom filled with square desks. Some boys represented school time with a picture of themselves in front of an open workbook on top of the desk, without the teacher in the picture. Both boys and girls who represented school often distinguished break-time from school time, devoting two sections to break-time, signalling the importance of this transition when they become aware of time and their place in the school day routine. One girl actually drew herself reading and interacting with the teacher at school and devoted several sections of her circle to activity inside school. That the majority of children represented school as a blank box, or drew activity only at break time raises the questions: why might this be? Does it indicate the degree to which children give up their agency at school, a certain inactivity in comparison with the rest of the day? Or is this representation made with the assumption they did not need to depict school, as a school researcher, I would already know all about that?

Early stories that Ms. Heath showed me could also be interpreted as evidencing a certain kind of passivity or abdication of agency within school confines. In them little consequential action happens that triggers a crisis or calls for action on their part.

Examples:

When I Went To the Bus Stop

One night my gran was coming over on the bus for tea and my mum told me to go

experience in terms of linear text, such as that of the standard questionnaire, might pose. Allison James has also used this technique in some of her work.

and see if she was there but she wasent then I saw a girl about my age smoking then people wlking in front of cars and busses. Then my gran came and gave me a cuddle when she came of the bus. Then we went home together and my mum made me some hot choc (Kitty)

The Adventure in the Wood

One day me and cousin were playing wrestling. And we got bord so we went up to my bedroom. and played on the play station and then we went to bed we went down stars at midnight we wached television we fel asleep waching television in the morning we kept hering noises out side. (Luke)

What initially struck me about these stories is the lack of agency. They are very faithfully chronologic. They chronicle in detail everyday life and give a sense of routine. Any sense of agency in that routine is absent or is implicitly attributed to others. Not much of the action is contingent on what went before. Turning for a brief moment to consider how these stories might be judged by standards such as those set by Labov (1972), which closely parallel the criteria of the testing scheme used within the school for assessing written texts, these stories fail to meet an essential criteria of Labov's (1972) definition of narrative, that of sequential dependent activity. What happens next is not dependent on or caused by what comes before. In addition, it is difficult to interpret them as including the important component of evaluation. If they answer the question "so what?" it is not in obvious or direct terms.

A closer examination of the stories reveals strong gender differences. As the chart below indicates, girls' and boys' stories fall into different categories. Girls' stories tend to meander more, describing detail, rather than narrating action. Whilst some boys' stories follow this format, more tend to involve action, violent lethal action, perpetrated on a passive child. Very few stories depict the child as being able to actively respond to this action. Most depict the child as being summarily eaten.

Figure 5.1: Categorisation of first story text assigned in the year:

Non-starters: only a line or two of text		Inconclusive: texts which do not easily fit into any category, mostly because they lack a clear climax or resolution		Meandering: Descriptive texts with little causal linking between sentences or expressed agency		Passive Coherence: texts with causal links between sentences in which violence is enacted upon a passive child		Active Coherence: texts with causal links in which violence enacted upon a child is actively responded to by the child	
G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B
1	2	2	2	7	2	1	6		3

This lack of coherence could be because they did not really have time to get started, and perhaps intended to say more, but were constrained by the amount of time it took to convert thought to written text in a jotter. However, all the stories do seem to reach a pause if not conclusion. The mother comes home, the shop is left, the day passes, or the night in front of the TV. The titles hint at an intent for there to be drama. These contrast sharply with the texts that follow. No clear conclusions can be drawn. Ms. Heath did report to me that she had encouraged the children to write exciting stories, and they had gone over examples of good titles in discussion together before writing. The titles may have been borrowed from the oral discussion, but the intent, or “spin” that the teacher wished the title suggestions to convey, may not have transferred. However, it is important to ask at this point whether this alternative form of story should not be seen as a valid form in its own right, rather than judged as an inferior or emerging version of narrative as defined and taught in the curriculum. If one looks at the current genre of cartoons, it is evident that in cartoons such as *Simpsons*, or *Southpark*, children’s worlds, their use of space and time, are portrayed in more fractured terms than they are in the standard narrative emplotments of quality “children’s literature”. One of the main departures that these new generations of cartoons make is to revel in the mundane and play cleverly upon its tropes. Do these children’s stories suit other purposes, or use cartoon genres instead of the traditional canon of children’s literature?

There is another possibility. Ms. Heath’s acceptance of, and interest in, their lives as children may have elicited from them more realistic responses than they otherwise would have produced. Perhaps they did not feel as constrained to model their

stories on school texts. Reading these stories raised many questions that served as a useful starting point to compare differing kinds of communication in the class.

DEBATING SANTA: POSITIONING SELF

Another glimpse into reality came further into the year, in which differing, perhaps evolving narrative structures were revealed during a whole class discussion time just after Christmas. First a note about the transcription format is, again, in order. Stubbs (1983) criticises discourse analysts who, working with short extracts, do not analyse the discourse so much as make claims and then look for discourse examples which will support them. To the extent that space allows, I try to include the discourse as a whole, bracketing my experience and interpretation of it, rather than fore-grounding my interpretation and only quoting selectively from the discourse (Chouliaraki 1997).

On the morning from which the following excerpt is taken, the discussion begins with a review of some recording work the children had been doing for me in class. They had been keeping track on a chart of the different stories in class, the different plays done in class, and the different information they were learning in class. Gleaning information from popular culture came up in the course of this discussion, which turned the conversation towards computer games and, from there, to Christmas gifts and Christmas itself. The children then began reciting "pieces" they had learned for the Christmas Assembly. Santa featured quite sweetly in one of these recitations and prompted my question, "What does Santa mean to you?" That there was quite a strong culture of encouraging each other is marked by the pupils continuing to clap for each other's responses as the discussion shifted into debate mode. Yet, there were other processes of comparison and subtle adaptation though not so overtly expressed, in which Bakhtin's concept of borrowing seemed to come into play. This conversation also is indicative of children's understanding of who they are supposed to be, or how adults "construct" them. They seemed to know that adults view (or construct) them as being more innocent or sheltered than they perhaps know themselves to be. Although they are ten years old, it became clear they were expected to still believe in Santa Claus and were cautious about contesting or subverting this construct. The first public response was quite docile, pitched to create the acceptable image of a child that will be rewarded, in contrast to the quick side comment that follows, spoken into the mike rather than to the class as a whole:

Beth: What does Santa mean?
 Liam: nothin' (as a side comment, made close to the mike)
 Beth: Leah? (responding to raised hand)
 Leah: To me,
 Ehm
 He means quite a lot
 Because, ehm
 He comes every Christmas
 And he doesn't like go past your house
 Or anything
 He always comes
 And gives you presents and...
 (pause)

But this position immediately begins to be deconstructed. First, by way of logical refutation:

Beth: Does anyone else want to say anything?
 Simon: Santa is
 Santa's quite strange to me
 Because how does he go
 To all the house in one night? (lots of excited voices a buzz of answers starting,)
 Kurt: I can answer his question
 Ms. Heath: one at a time (class quiets)
 B: Go ahead Kurt
 Kurt: Well you know how?
 Well at the other side of the earth
 It's daytime when it's our night time?
 So he does half the earth in one night
 And then the other half in the other night
 B: That's interesting
 (lots of clapping, led by Ms. H.)

I am surprised that at ten years old, children still conform to the practice or role of believing in Santa. Wondering if Ennew's (1999) depiction of the Western conception of children as the innocent and sentimental centre of the idealised family is particularly apt for this setting, I try another tack to see what else they know about the cultural practice of Santa. This questions gets two responses. One quick one, again into the mike more than to the class by Liam, which succinctly unmasks the pretence. The other more performative response chooses to revel in the realm of pretence, sarcastically perhaps. The third child to offer a contribution to the discussion opens up much wider the consideration of culture and the roles that adults can pretend to be:

B: Do any of you think you are going to be Santa someday?
 (lots of responses, rise and fall, yes, nooo)
 Liam: My dad dressed up as Santa (again as a side comment)

Tony: Ehm,
 I might be going in a wee sleigh (motions as if steering)
 I like to say----
 Helloooooo! (lots of girls giggle)
 (Tony continues with excited noise of driving)
 Courtney: (.)⁸
 Ehm
 On Christmas my dad dressed up as Freddie⁹—(oh, ooo, ewww from
 different people)
 B: Freddie!
 - - - -
 But what did he do
 When he was Freddie?
 Courtney: --
 Ehm, what's--my wee cousins we-,
 My wee cousins were there
 And he dressed up as Freddie
 He ran up the stairs
 And teased them both
 And me and my sister started cryin.
 (some wicked laughter in background—including Ms. Heath)

After the next participant enthusiastically recounts the time he and other boys devoted during the holidays to playing "Scream"¹⁰, complete with ghost masks, I probe the comparison between Freddie and Santa further:

B: So who do you believe in more, Freddie or Santa (cutting through hubbub)
 Many: Freddie!
 A bit of a shouting match ensues, Santa proponents explaining; Freddie fans just saying "Freddie!" repeatedly. A vote follows. More vote for Freddie than Santa. Only girls vote for Santa, except one boy who is then singled out derisively until he clarifies his vote.
 Liam: But they are both fake (in low voice like earlier side comment)
 Beth: But they're both . . . ?
 Liam: (small voice) fake

Some go "Yeah!" as if finally the truth is out, some clap cautiously, not the whole class as before, as if they are not sure this comment is going to be rewarded, or that they should be seen to support it. Others protest "No!!!" Clapping lasts through extended No!!! Some break into further explanation of position. Liam clarifies, by saying, "they're not real." Others are still keen to reinterpret. Leah is able to distinguish herself from general hubbub and is recognised to speak:
 Leah: It means ehm, (she glances side long, speaks slowly as if picking her words diplomatically)
 It's not true that Santa comes

⁸ Indicates omitted extract.

⁹ Main character in Nightmare on Elm Street film series

¹⁰ Another popular horror film series

But
If, you,
Some people in this class don't believe in Santa
And they say it's just your mom and dad
So there's (others break in and are shushed by Ms. H.)
.....and bring them downstairs
when you're sleepin

Chad: Well, I'm going to say two things
See those who believe in Freddie Kruger,
I don't
Because it's just a film
I mean
And I don't think the taps would turn into scary hands and burst up and grab
your hand
And ~¹¹ (pull you down)
Cause that's in Nightmare on Elm Street III
I don't think they would chase you about your house

It is a really strange juxtaposition, Freddie and Santa, but the class seems to have been quite at home comparing them. Chad makes a very convincing argument. No one after that tries to reinsert Freddie into the conversation. Given his very active immersion in acting out action and horror films, his assertions are surprising. If any child could be said to be at risk of blurring the distinctions between reality and fantasy, as is so often feared, it should be Chad. Yet, his familiarity with these genres, though not breeding contempt, seems to have engendered a no-nonsense approach to critiquing them. This succinct dismissal of popular culture is followed by a narrative that provides experiential verification of Santa:

Chad: I think it was about eh	
quarter past eh,	(scene set)
Quarter past one	
Something like that	
And I walked	
and	
I heard something,	(complicating factors)
A door, something openin it(??)	
And I went to my mum	
I went to my mum's room	
She was in bed.	
(someone else says something about wee brother)	
I checked my brothers and they were sleepin	
And then,	
When I went downstairs	
All I seen was presents	(climax)

¹¹ Indicates an estimation of intended speech, blurred by other noises on tape

Here, I thought,
 Naw,
 Presents cannae walk (evaluation)

At this point everyone in the class wants to tell an experiential story proving or disproving Santa. It is this form of argumentation that is for them most convincing. The stories that follow borrow their structure and certain key elements from Chad's. A canon seems quickly to be agreed upon and is strengthened throughout the course of the discussion. For credibility one must know where parents and others were so, that by process of elimination, it could only be Santa. The exact time is given, sometimes with paralinguistical features that indicate it is deliberately added, rather than integral to the memory elicited. An example of story to disprove Santa was:

Luke: Eh, well I was beggin' mom and dad to tell me if Santa was real
 (evaluation)
 But they wouldn't tell me,
 Then,
 I stayed up all night and
 But I went to be about .. two (scene set)
 And then
 I just seen my dad creepin down the stair (complicating factor)
 He had all these presents (group: oooh!) (climax)

The contributions against Santa become more detailed and practical, as if it takes some momentum to dare to say them, to make sure it is safe to go against the predominant assumption that adults want them to act as if they do believe in Santa, both parties having different vested interests in this mutual agreement. After his earlier, subtler remarks, Liam finally contributes his own story only after others have been told. His story is unique in that its scope sets a much wider frame and does not necessarily centre upon him. He cites the presence of Dixon and Game Inc. bags obviously containing gifts that later show up "from Santa", and older relatives putting gifts under the tree "from Santa" for his younger nephews and nieces who will visit later in the day¹².

At issue within this discussion by way of compared narratives are important societal dynamics. Children's constrained agency becomes visible. Children are working out whether they will position themselves as passive consumers or active

¹² It is perhaps no accident that Liam is the youngest in a family of older sisters. This and other factors influence Liam's family culture and may explain why the enchantment may have slipped a little earlier than it has for others.

participants in the gift exchange economy. What is evident is they are capable of collusion, indeed, carefully graded shades of it.

What is also important to note about this exchange is that, unlike the written texts examined earlier, boys and girls alike demonstrate they are capable of constructing stories that conform to the standard form of causally linked statements, that set the scene, indicate complicating factor, and depict climax and resolutions, which at least imply evaluation. They use stories as argument, or as proof rather, of an implied argument that it is perhaps not politic to assert more baldly. These stories offered as subtle argument are the most tightly structured of any I record in oral or written form throughout my time with them. This raises the possibility that the reason their written stories differed is because the relationship context in which they were constructed differed. The texts were written in response to the teacher. It is widely known that it is neither polite nor astute to argue with the teacher's request. That motivation for communication being constrained, what, in its place, becomes the internal engine driving the construction of the text? Is it some form of passively holding a pose? Progressive education has attempted to address the underlying motivations learners might have to express themselves and have attempted to recreate, in the formal context of the classroom, realistic settings for both consuming and producing texts. As Alexander (2000: 430, 498-500) comments, just how efficacious these practices are, such as author's chair and peer conferences, depends on the underlying and often hidden dynamics of discourse.

POKEMONS: A GENRE OF AGENCY

Following further the evolution of spoken and written genres in the classroom, I found there were other ways in which children's stories diverged from the standard, when stories serve yet a different purpose: that of playing, entertaining and competing with each other. The following passage borrows or engages much more directly from popular media culture. The playful use of story becomes much more like game scenarios particularly among the boys. While conforming to established rules of the exercise by taking turns, children used the context of their turns, subtly shifting their language use, to subvert or reconfigure that genre from within. In doing so they bring into play a dynamic of particular interest to Bakhtin. They carnivalise the story.

By this time Ms. Heath's class had become very interested in Pokemons. The associated vocabulary had become common currency with which Ms. Heath was well acquainted. The focus of the session was to create a story about dragons. The topic of dragons first entered the classroom discourse through a curricular piece in the language arts workbooks about the significance of dragons in Chinese culture, particularly in celebrating Chinese New Year. Ms. Heath chose to expand the language lesson into an art project. She had assigned the class to work in groups to create large colourful painted dragons for the display board at the back of the class. However, by the time the activity took place, the class had managed to shift the cultural significance, slightly to the east of China, to a cartoon world, as one ten year old informant told me, based on pocket-monsters created by a Japanese computer game master wizard. Two of the groups had given their dragons Pokemon names; other groups had drawn on lesser known cartoons or made up puns. In introducing the storytelling in the round activity, Ms. Heath invited them to nominate characters to include, suggesting they nominate the dragons, which they had just proudly shown me upon my arrival on that day. As children began to suggest characters, Ms. Heath feigned complete ignorance of the dragon names:

Ms. Heath: Spot the?

Whole class: Spotzilla,!

Ms. Heath: Spotzilla that's right

Someone from class: Charizard

Ms. Heath: Charlie's eye

Class: Charizard!!

Ms. Heath: Can you spell that? C - H -

Class: Charizard! (excited whispers)

Someone: What if the groups are saying something mean about other dragons?

Ms. Heath: I would really hope not

I would really really be disappointed about it

Thanks for telling me

?: Oh no

Kitty: -----

Ms. Heath: Kitty, can you spell it,

Class: (loudly) Splatter!

Ms. Heath: Splatter, like splllllllt! (a sound)

Class: Yeh

James: Charameleon, . . .

This segment of class transcript begins with both an example of disciplinary discourse as well as Ms. Heath's more playful discourse. In disciplining the class or "reeling them in a little", if the class becomes too chaotic, particularly to censure behaviour that is disrespectful of other classmates, Ms. Heath reverts to a much more traditional and markedly English discourse. The hallmarks of which are both

in the vocabulary: "properly" etc., and within grammatical structure, i.e. she uses the subjunctive, "I should think so" or, "I wouldn't have expected it of you" as she does so here:

Ms. Heath: I would really hope not
I would really really be disappointed about it . . .

This is a tense construction that none of the students use either between themselves or when addressing teachers. It serves to create distance between Ms. Heath and the class, and reminds students of those who also use this distinctive grammatical structure, i.e. other teachers, thereby reminding them of the larger school culture, which contains them. The subjunctive also serves to suspend a warning over the children's heads, the implications of what Ms. Heath would do should the subjunctive become the demonstrative¹³. If the breach of class rules became any more evident, she would act to punish the offenders. But at this state of play, the threat is very subtly made in such a way as to give both parties room to manoeuvre. This tactic is based on the unspoken understanding that teachers do not see everything that goes on in a classroom, that they are not meant to, and that as long as the children's activities do not impinge too markedly into the sphere of activities that the teacher is focusing upon, children are given some autonomy.

The phrase examined above could be seen as carrying a centripetal valence. Yet, within the same opening remarks there are also centrifugal dynamics at work. Ms. Heath's feigned ignorance of alternative culture, which could be read as centripetal, actually works to elicit children's centrifugal assertion of it. She switches from disciplining them to sparring with them. She insists on hearing Charlie's eye—until the whole class is shouting, "Charizard!" at her. Ms. Heath is at once defying the Pokemon centred genre, and playing with words in such a way as to pull away from its dominance. But in doing so, at another level, she is acting in such a way as to give children an opportunity to assert the importance of Pokemon, providing them the opportunity to voice their own centrifugal utterance relative to sanctioned curriculum content. In the months they have worked together, through exchanges like this, children have learned that in some instances they can, if not argue with their teacher, spar with her—much like the carnival dynamic of British pantomime constructs a space in which it is permissible to shout, "Oh no you don't!"

¹³ Chouliaraki (1998) also examines teacher's sophisticated use of modality to navigate shifting power relationships in moving from whole class to individual conference interaction.

What follows is a story-in-the-round activity. The class sits in a large oval. The expectation is that each member will add a little bit to the story, unless they feel unable, in which case they can pass. The story goes round the class three times. Students' contributions vary in length. To a Pokemon outsider the story may seem very broken and chaotic; however, there are clear threads of activity that run through the narrative. Certainly there are many complex dynamics both centripetal and centrifugal at play, giving this jointly constructed story its own unique signature in the ever evolving speech community of Ms. Heath's primary five class.

Each participant's contribution can be seen as being a different mix of centripetal and centrifugal forces. Students champion different characters and react differently to the teacher and researcher's cues as to the desired direction of the story. Some contributions can be seen as being so centrifugally assertive that they cross the boundary from being a deviation from the main story line, to creating a new centre around which the narrative circulates.

- 18.¹⁴ Peter: Charizard came in and started batterin' em
19. Cliff: (bell rings)-----
20. Beth: The other people that were in the church
21. They ran out of the building
22. Liam: Then, Smudge the water dragon came in
23. And he, eh water came out of his ehm nose
24. And he hit everyone
25. Greg: and then Charmeleon came and went
26. what are youz doin fighting
27. Leon: the minister Charmeleon called for eh,
28. Splatter to come
29. Courtney: Then Spatzilla came
30. And he scared everybody away
31. Because he was squeezin his spots

Through the first round of telling children seem content, indeed excited to be getting away with just mentioning Pokemon characters and describing their activities. After all, the trading cards themselves are banned at school as a precaution against thefts and fights.

The tacit acceptance of this shift in genre encourages further attempts. The next is to bring in the voice of Pokemon characters. In lines 190-196 the ante is raised when one pupil begins imitating the sound effects and voices of Pokemon characters. This

¹⁴ This particular discourse extract is quite lengthy in its entirety and because the dynamics I wish to draw attention to take place across the excerpt as a whole I have numbered the lines, as this helps the reader locate the lines within the process as a whole.

attempt is met with gleeful shouts of laughter and is quickly followed by other attempts at voicing a wide range of characters from popular culture:

213. Luke: Meanwhile witch Emelda just came back from on holiday
214. And saw all the mess
215. And he said,
216. "I don't be LIEVE it" (lots of laughs)
217. Matthew: And then the witch said
218. "eeeeeeee!" (high nasal voice)
219. and then suddenly he went "llllll!"
220. and Godzilla came up and squished the witch
221. James: Then then suddenly
222. They heard
223. Spotzilla heard music
224. "Dong dong dong dong da dong" (yodel)
225. It was Tarzan
226. And then he says
227. "Hohh! Which one of you want a hike, hmph?"
228. And then suddenly Spotzilla came up
229. And went
230. "ArHHHHhhhh!"
231. And then, and then Tarzan flew away, bumped into a tree
232. And he went
233. oh forgot to say
234. "Watch out for that Tree!" (giggles)

Interestingly, Ms. Heath had started this second go-round by voicing the priest character that she had introduced in round one, giving him a thick Irish brogue. Although the children give voice to a number of characters, the one most often repeated and thereby reinforced is a telltale phrase from the classes' most recent commercial play genre of choice—World Wrestling Federation (WWF). Until only a few weeks ago, WWF fans outnumbered Pokemon fans. Lingering allegiances are evidenced by its strongest proponents in the class, who, in their turns, bring in wrestling characters and terminology (215-217, 431-433). However, a more ambivalent use of WWF terminology is made by many more members of the class. The phrase "I don't be LIEVE it," voiced in a particular way is a clear borrowing from the wrestlers. However, it is done by a number of students who put the words in the mouth of Pokemons, witches, and others. The striking juxtaposition has the richness of a new metaphor in the making. Each time the phrase is reappropriated, the class howls its approval in cascades of laughter (216, 218, 413, 452, 461, 463).

This is a decisive shift. In moving from talking about Pokemons in the third person, to actually being them in the first person, the Pokemon/cartoon world becomes all the more present, it begins to envelop the classroom. Dialogue between characters

opens up more possibilities for signifying and signalling intentions.¹⁵ Without stopping and asking explicit permission, this shift has been negotiated in mid-story and is a good example of what Bakhtin means when he says that the same utterance can accomplish more than one task at a time, tasks that in one sense conform and in another sense deviate from expectations, or in other words are both centrifugal and centripetal. By taking turns they indicate their co-operation with established norms and the discourse of schooling. With the content of their turn they signal allegiances across the story, expanding on or ignoring previous contributions. Reading the tacit permission of their teacher, they test the boundaries of their imaginary liberty until they have crossed over from one world to another.

The introduction of voicing Pokemons (191), rather than just describing them, triggers a whole series of voicings, several of which go outside either WWF or Pokemon genres. From this point on pupils take the opportunity to introduce other voices, including Tarzan (221-234), *Donkey Kong* (438-441), and, remarkably, the recent focus of an all-school Scots poetry competition (203-206). However, these voices remain deviations, to which other pupils choose not to give further momentum. Pokemon is the clear vehicle for children to assert a new group defined genre through an increasing inclusion of language that defines the Pokemon world.

After describing and then voicing Pokemons, a further genre shift is accomplished when pupils begin to include other non-dragon characters from Pokemon, most noticeably when Ash, the central Pokemon trainer, enters the story at line 306, which again is affirmed by an outburst of laughter. Interestingly this bid to go further into Pokemon world follows directly on Ms. Heath's attempt to reign in the bloodthirsty antics of the dragons. The sequence can be seen as a continuation of the pattern set up at the very beginning, when Ms. Heath pretends ignorance of the Pokemon world only to be met with greater and greater insistence upon its terms. Ash is taken up by other speakers in the story in the next round. As well, other pupils bring in further aspects of the Pokemon world. A pupil refers to the "owners" of the dragons (351) and finally Peekachoo, the most symbolic identifier of Pokemon culture, makes his entrance at 452. The class has managed to turn the

¹⁵ It should be noted that dialogue within an anecdote sets up a second conversation layer within which a particular theme can be explored in more depth. New dialogic relationships are set up between the speaker's voice and the voices they invoke in the anecdote and between the themes of the anecdote and the conversation (Maybin 1994: 143 citing Bakhtin).

activity from a tale of dragons, which happen to have Pokemon names, into an adventure entirely immersed in the Pokemon realm. The cutting between action scenes, which centre upon Spotzilla, Charizard, and Charmeleon, is in keeping with the flow of the actual cartoon. In fact the introduction of Ash and Peekachoo serves to stabilise the narrative as they begin to exert their own centripetal force.

However, there is another tempting option that works its way into the story. Near the beginning of round two, I attempted to shift the focus away from what, at the time, not being well versed in Pokemon culture, I could only read as senseless mayhem. I do so by introducing my own character, a witch whom I hoped might be seen by the children as deviant enough to be more acceptable than the squeaky clean priest. Although both witch and priest got subsequent air time, often by students making their own bid to restore order when they themselves perhaps felt the boundaries were in danger of being transgressed too far, both characters received merciless treatment. The witch's death was implied (217-220), while the priest's was declared outright by the same intrepid, though soft-spoken, participant who introduced Ash to the story. He did so in direct defiance of the teacher, who spoke just before him and was sitting physically right next to him. That he was able to make this move says as much about the underlying trust in the classroom as it does about the resistance students are playfully allowed to express.

The demise of the witch gives rise to some interesting turns:

- 217. Matthew: And then the witch said
- 218. ??????? (high nasal voice)
- 219. and then suddenly he went llllll!
- 220. and Godzilla came up and squished the witch

A Tarzan digression is made in lines 221-234, but is ignored by the following three speakers, who remain intent on usurping authority figures. Another bastion of respectability falls, symbolically destroying the realm being supplanted by the Pokemon realm:

- 235. Kurt: Spotzilla was having a battle with his cousin
- 236. Cause they were playin toy fightin
- 237. Spotzilla flew and hurt his head off a building
- 238. It was the Forest Hill Primary School! (loud laughter erupts)
- 239. It got squashed (laughter continues)

Not only is the school squashed, but it is done by characters engaging in a prohibited activity. "Toy fighting" is banned on the playground. The next speaker reinforces the plot line by alluding back to the witch's death:

- 240. Clara: Meanwhile back where the witch had got squashed

241. The witches cousin came up and went
242. "What's happened here" (high gurgled voice)

This turn sets up the next speaker, who over the next few weeks showed himself to be one of the master storytellers of the class. At this point he already distinguishes himself from his peers. His contributions are lengthier and contain more linked components of a standard narrative. He moves the action of the scene forward more substantially than many others do¹⁶. In this instance he works a major twist in the plot. He introduces into the story as characters, Ms. Heath, closely followed by her companion, Beth Cross, rescuing them almost from the ruins of the all but annihilated normality, while at the same time pulling them down a rabbit hole, or space-time continuum hole. By naming them, the teller assumes a certain power over them, leaving them open to be manipulated as a puppeteer does a puppet. However, the act is also a kind of compliment and act of inclusion. These two characters, are described as like the witches in that they are doctors. Perhaps they are a hybrid somewhere between witches and teachers. This, as well, is in keeping with Pokemon culture, in which a nurse at the Pokemon training centre features prominently. However, they are not to tame the dragons, rather their civilising influence is to be felt by aiding them:

243. Tony: Next
244. Ms. Heath came into the
245. Came in to see all the dragons
246. Because she was a doctor
247. And Ms. Cross was her assistant
248. So they were walking down the road
249. And they saw all these Dragons
250. And one had their eye out
251. And they were saying
252. "Ohh what is wrong little dragon
253. what is wrong" (funny accent, with a bit of a lilt higher pitched but
not squeaky)
254. And then they went
They fixed his eye . . .

This contribution is an instance of a dialogical compromise. It is a compromise not only about the use of language, but also the actions the language symbolises. The

¹⁶ This oral fluency did not transfer well to paper, in fact a review of his written work revealed the written texts were often fragmented, and skipped or jumped around, as if his writing could not keep up with the stream of narrative that wanted to be transcribed.

speaker puts the civilising influence into the voice of Ms. Heath and indicates such influences will be tolerated as long as they are put to the aid, rather than set in opposition to, the dominance of the Pokemon dragons. Although Ms. Heath in particular is later threatened with being squished (396-399), a pupil comes to her rescue, thereby assuming the power of a puppeteer over her, yet, does so in order to endow her with "super-human strength", which is both to give her back power, whilst at the same time drawing her further into the Pokemon world (434-437). The teacher herself has become endowed with cartoon, if not Pokemon, attributes.

This reading of the class constructed story sees much of the dialogicality, as well as the carnival dynamic about which Bakhtin wrote. Bakhtin saw carnival, the turning upside down of the established order, as essential to the health and well being of the community that regularly inhabited such order. An important feature of carnival is the rituals and plays whereby the king is portrayed as a clown, and the clown as a king. Something very similar happens to the teacher and her sidekick researcher in this classroom version of carnival.

What did children gain from this period of teacher-sanctioned carnival? It is offered as a possible explanation that this activity had reciprocal consequences. In as much as the ludic world was allowed to enter the school structure, the children took into their ludic world structural considerations that define the genre of story as taught at this school. Evidence for this trade off, or indeed the hand-over that Bruner (1996) sees as so critical, is apparent in the class discussion that follows.

Immediately after the story session, Ms. Heath invited the class to participate in a discussion about stories both written and told. The form of discourse that followed was a mirror opposite of that which preceded it. In the story children strictly took turns, but within those turns were given great freedom to express themselves. In the following discussion they are to practise co-operation skills. They are not assigned turns by seating order or by the teacher as arbitrator, but are given the power and the responsibility to negotiate with each other who gets to speak, based on listening and co-operating. As Alexander noticed in the contrast he draws between English and American classrooms and classrooms in France, Russia and India, this tactic is indicative not so much of a contrast in methods, but in contrasting conceptions of curriculum and draws explicitly on the values of democratic pedagogy (2001: 427). Alexander also draws attention to the fact that promoting democratic discourse gives rise to many more disciplinary interactions than discourse in which the power

imbalance in the class is firmly set and disciplinary issues routinised. In the following excerpt their first "democratic" attempt at disciplining or regulating the flow of talk for themselves breaks down rather quickly, and Ms. Heath intervenes to remind them of their earlier practice learning this skill.

In examining how popular culture should be re-approached by educators, Giroux (1992) cautions against appropriating popular culture into practices that are disempowering or antithetical to children's enjoyment of them. That Ms. Heath chooses not to dominate the discussion or even control it is a wise and perhaps crucial decision. She does not dictate terms. As a result, children appropriate her terms of analysis for themselves, trying them on without compulsion as they do the stance of cultural critique. In the following sequence they borrow her utterances, trying her voice on to see what kind of fit it has, what it can enable them to do, just as they earlier tried on Pokemon voices. Their voices actually drop in pitch as they take on the voices of critical readers, drawing on their experience as play critics that they have gained from their after-break performance sessions. Yet, as Kurt indicates, he is not quite ready to relinquish the puppeteer role, but craftily inserts it within the topic requested:

Kurt: Well when I write a story
I think about people and their personality
And it comes in handy later in the story
If I was doing Ms. Heath----???
Then I would say Ms. Heath was watching a football game
And jumped out of the crowd and started playin and she won

Ms. Heath does not actively oppose this continued playful mode, but models an alternative:

Ms. Heath: Oh that's interesting
I tell you, when I write a story
I'll be thinking of so many things at once
That I don't want to forget some of my ideas
So I might just get a scrap piece of paper
And write a few words down
That just reminds me of about it
(.....)

After a bit of confusion over who can hold the floor, in which Ms. Heath provides a little gentle steering, the discussion continues:

Chad: Leah is speaking (loudly)
(More talking over each other)
(Persistent coughing)
Chad: Leah can speak ! (louder)
James: When I-- Sometimes when I-- I
Leah: I think that—
Ms. Heath: James, Leah is trying to speak (slowly)

Leah: I think that ehm
 The beginning of the story is the
 like ehm
 The is the best part
 And cause
 You get to
 Whose ever like listening or if I was reading it out to the class
 Ehm I would begin it with tellin them
 Who Are they and What they're doing and all that

Many voices: Yeh,

Chad: Well I think the end part's the most important bit
 Cause it has to make sense with the rest of the story

A discussion continues in which children wonder aloud which is the best bit of the story, and what this might mean about how they fit together or what they form as a whole. It is somewhat later in the discussion that Ms. Heath's words, "So I might just get a scrap piece of paper," are borrowed by a participant who has had trouble getting a word in edgewise. He resorts to her words in a bid to lengthen his allowed talk time and to achieve a positive response.

James: Well you know sometimes
 When em
 When I normally like
 When I write stories sometimes
 I normally get a lot of pictures in my head
 For little bits of ideers—
 Well, the bits I get stuck on is—
 Sometimes when you're readin like a chapter book or something
 Like ---- and Hannah
 You forget like all the
 All the information that was given ya
 At the beginning
 (Someone tries to break in so James raises his voice on What)
What I actually do is I get
 Like a little scrap of paper
 the really really
 good bits to write down
 And then that way
 When earlier on when I'm readin the story
 I don't forget part
 Chapter one--

Other voices: I think that—

I think the same as you
 I think

Chad: I think we should let Liam have a shot

As well as gaining some experience moderating their own discussion, in which Chad, again, plays a pivotal role, the children also raised for themselves important questions about the components of a story and just how they fit together: what makes a good beginning, a good ending, and which is most important. They are given further opportunities to relate this awareness back to their own practice, as the activity is repeated a few more times with interesting results.

GENDERED STORY CIRCLES

In a subsequent session Ms. Heath, aware of the gender dynamics within her classroom, separated the more active boys into one group and the more "settled" boys with the girls in another group to give the girls a chance to have more say in the construction of the joint story. As a result, differing story strategies and structures became apparent. In the boys' group each turn used bodily exaggerations or eruptions to elicit laughter from the rest of the group. In this respect it could be said that there was an agreed goal that all participants cooperated in trying to meet. The cooperation in the girls' circle took the more standard form of continuing with the same story, same characters and same setting in a more linear construction of shared activity, tacitly borrowing/obeying the rules of standard story genre. Each person's contribution is much more lengthy than in previous versions of this activity, significantly changing the pace of the activity, and the kinds of demands made on those who must cooperate with the activity. Often each child depicted a whole scenario, complete with complicating factor, climax, and resolution. The plot became more cohesive, and participants worked more closely together to build a climax to the story. In instances where their offering is not a complete scenario, it is often intentionally left open ended for the next speaker to complete. This signals that the speaker has an awareness that component belongs next and an intention to share the structure with the next speaker. Instances like this usually involved a building of tension leading up to a climax, ending with a question. This tactic was modelled both by myself and the class teacher on a few occasions but not overtly suggested.

Whilst the boys' circle also told longer episodes with more complex structuring; there the similarity between the two circles ends:

From the Girls' circle:

Simon: there was po--
potion barrels,

there was oil lying about
she was doing magic
she was killing people
and she was going round on her broomstick
haunting people
she turned into a ghost sometimes
turned into human sometimes
turned into a werewolf sometimes
and most of the time
a witch (heavy borrowing of expression, rhythms and suspension of
voice at the end as previous speaker, Beth)

Courtney: But
the children
liked her
because
when she told them to come in
she had sweets for them
but that night
one child stayed in the woods
and spied on her
and they heard the scream of their life
and
ah wolves ehm voice
and went wasss
woooooewooooo!

Eileen: That night
that morning
they
the child that saw her
told everyone
and one of them said it wasn't true
so
they went
and she asked em if they wanted some sweets
but the sweets were poisonous

There was a little boy who lived over the road from this house
and he lived in the cottage
he knew there was something freaky going on in that house
so he tried to warn everyone
but anyone
but none of the children would listen to them

The boys are outnumbered in this group by a ratio of three to one, however, that does not stop one of them from group-hopping, as it were. His contribution, though tangentially incorporating the setting of woods, actually fits better with the kind of story being told in the other circle. His second contribution refers back to his earlier one with almost no connection to anything that anyone else has offered in the intervening turns:

Kurt: Do you remember Claude and Barrat?
 that were walkin through the forest?
 I forgot to mention Claude's younger brother named Kurt (Dennis laughs)
 he was only a level ten soldier wanna be
 Claude was a level 18
 and Barrat was a level 23
 they were all walkin through the forest
 when the met this
 person who said
 Hi I'm gonna gutter (kind of sing-song voice)
 So Kurt said
 this is my fight
 I want some experience. (American John D accent)
 so Kurt went up
 and he had a little dagger
 and the guy used move called mug
 he went up to Kurt and stole all his money
 and Kurt just slashed him and took all his money back
 so the man ran away
 and Kurt got so much experience he grew to level 18 same as Claude

Kurt sets himself and solves an entirely different problem to the one the rest of the circle is grappling with. However, his contribution differs from the boys' circle in that within his story issues of motivation, intention, even ethics are explicitly addressed. The contributions the boys make in the other circle are much more of a cartoon or, "carnival" nature. There is no commentary or explanation of relations between characters given. Jumps in setting are sometimes signalled, at least acknowledged, by opening phrases like, "this is chapter two", or "a hundred years later", or "in a different country," which is more of a licence to change than a justification. Their offerings centre on key voicings of characters often expressing extreme emotions. There is some agreement that the central character is a dragon/dinosaur character, but who he interacts with, or in what setting, changes with each speaker. Each turn seems to be an opportunity to borrow from a different genre or mode of popular culture, as if each is being tried on for effect. The agreed activity is that of eliciting laughter and delight from each other. One of the tropes taken up in a sustained way is from *Jurassic Park II* in which the dinosaur enters a movie theatre in which a movie about dinosaurs is playing. This situation of double awareness, made triple in the storytelling situation, is very appealing. Tropes and action segments from *Godzilla*, another current film, were also incorporated, particularly the resolution or solution of the problem in terms of overwhelming military might. Their contributions seem to be thrown out, images are thrown back and forth like in a game rather than strung together. There is a complex combination of cooperation and competition to the activity. Eager as the boys are to enjoy

themselves, they nevertheless each have to win each other's attention. This dynamic comes across strongly in listening to the recording of the activity, but is lost in the linear transcription. Laughter, often anticipatory and gaining momentum as the punch line approaches, and other paralinguistic responses flow in and around the individual offerings, as a kind of commentary:

Chad: (. . .)

and he barged into him with his spike

and the dragon went

eeeeeee (really high pitched squeak)

and then

he blew fire

all the all the ten heads blew fire at Riptoe

and he went ah ah ah ah bye bye see you later (very throaty horse rhythmic)

Tony: And then these two monsters called

crush and gulp came along

and

then

the dragon

I mean eh,

the dragon

the dragon

blew off gulps heid

(pause)

blew off ehm gulps heid

and then he

then he picked up crusher

and squeezed him

and all the blood came

gushin out of his face

and all down his body

Jim: Eventually he blew up

Keifer: Then steps gremp chasity (giggling)

Then the dragon didn't like the song

so he just

crushed em all

and he went

Tragedy! I'm dead (really high voice) laughter off mike

And I wish I could go on to bed!

Hasib: He was walkin along

after he'd seen Steps

and he was uh

he saw this man

he was about

ninety

and what is it

he didn't blow em up or anything

he was just eh
he was like walking beside him
and all that

Greg: One billion years later
I'm in a walking stick now
will someone please help me
I'm dying

Then eventually
he started flyin
and someone shot him down

Liam: And then he blew up the person who done it (he starts giggling
continues)
and then Ms. Heath came along
with a hoover (rest join in laughter)
and hoovered up the ashes

Though the connections between each offering are chaotic, it is interesting to note that, in this version of the activity, the turns that each boy takes are longer and more complex than previously. The characters they introduce perform several consecutive acts, interacting with a variety of images and characters that sample many forms of popular culture. The acceleration in oral storytelling ability evidenced in the class is so dramatic, it lends credence to the hypothesis that what children needed in order to portray this competence was permission rather than attainment of a new skill.

ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE MODELS: COMMERCIAL CULTURE OR POPULAR CULTURE?

If they are not learning a new skill, but gaining the confidence to display one already internalised, what is that skill and where was it learned? If the intent and structure of these narrative exchanges do not resemble the standard one that the school sets before them to emulate, what do they resemble? The following description could be speaking of the boys' round of narrative exchanges:

(The) text flaunts its own contrived arbitrariness by exaggerating the unconventional use of codes through devices such as juxtaposition, interpolation, superimposition, misattribution and intertextual integration. . It appears to create a "heterotopia", linking together the incongruous and packing each frame with contradictions, non-conventional signifiers . . . the characters seem completely extraneous to one another, and the worlds they inhabit appear unrelated and outside historical time and space in a world of artifice. (Goldman 1992: 211)

However, here Goldman is describing the advertising's major shift to the postmodern "non-ad" in the late 80s, epitomised by Reebok. If one considers the time, attention and motivation for acquiring the "photographic literacy" (Goldman 1992: 2) necessary to decipher commercial television, where programme and advertising vie in a spiralling competition for viewers' attention, it does not seem so surprising that they should be more adept at this literacy than the school variations. The question is, can their photographic literacy be drawn upon to facilitate the development of other literacies? If photographic literacy is a result of direct interaction with the commercial world, what purpose do school literacies continue to serve in isolation from this applied literacy? These questions become more urgent when one considers the larger hegemonic struggles contested through the medium of photographic literacy and the cultural ethos they purvey. As Goldman remarks, "television often registers as the heart and soul of postmodernism because of its relentless scrambling of signifieds and signifiers, mixing and matching meanings" (1992: 202). What is troubling about this is that faced with the onslaught of the barrage of seemingly free-floating images, and signifiers, faced with too much individuation, too much social construction of reality and too much commodity hyperbole, viewers can lose their ability to make meaningful responses or to believe in the possibility of meaningful exchanges. There is a pressure to conform to a sophisticated posture, one of "a cynical incredulous stance toward this world along with a nihilistic facework strategy of indifference regarding the promise of individual difference" (Goldman 1992:202).

Is there a response to nihilism to be found in Bakhtin's perspective? Bakhtin does in fact deal with the nihilism, not of the fin de siècle of the 20th century but those of past centuries. For Bakhtin shared laughter and embodied knowledge and expression are of crucial importance. Crucial also is the distinction between carnival laughter and its corrupted, partial form, satirical laughter, in which a response is no longer welcomed or anticipated. In his introduction to the doctoral thesis, in which he explores the holistic possibilities of the seemingly aberrant chaotic practice of

carnival, he carefully distinguishes between the kind of carnival celebrated by the community as a whole with its impetus and control largely in the hands of those with little prestige or power, and latter day interpretations of carnival which are bereft of this participatory dynamic. He traces a historical decline or inversion of the meaning of carnival, characterising the 19th and early 20th century uses of the tropes of carnival as nihilistic, portrayed by a carnival mask, that "hides .. . a terrible vacuum. A nothingness lurk(ing) behind it" (Bakhtin 1984: 40).¹⁷ The main difference between the original meaning of carnival and more contemporary versions is the degree of participation and interconnection of the viewed and viewing. Bakhtin claims in authentic carnival that they are one; all participate. It is this very participation that overcomes fear and laughs in the face of terror, which is one of the main purposes of carnival. Conversely, the withdrawal into private space and abstract ideals has worked the decline in laughter and meant that carnival, at least in modern Europe, has come to be associated with fear and is used to inspire fear (Bakhtin 1984: 38). It is interesting that he insists that footlights that separate audience from performer (much less the pale glare of the television or computer screen) are antithetical to the holistic version of carnival.

CARNIVAL VIOLENCE IN EMBODIED PLAY

By raising the issue of fear, the linked concept of violence also presents itself. How is the violent content of their stories to be understood? Should it even have been allowed into the classroom, and thereby tacitly condoned? In these activities, as well as the more in-depth experiences with boys whom I worked with outside of class, I found immersion into their play-world brought a perspective on violence that I have yet to see addressed in the literature on popular culture and children. Bakhtin's description of grotesque comedy in carnival, in fact, comes closest of anything that I have read to describing the fascination boys displayed, not so much with violence in itself, but with acts, considered violent, that enable them to explore embodied change and exaggeration. Bakhtin's emphasises that in grotesque comedy the processes are cyclical; opposites turn into each other, including death into rebirth. It is this very cyclicity which engenders the liberating response to fear. This

¹⁷ "The most extensive form of reduced laughter in modern times (especially starting with Romanticism) is irony," (Bakhtin 1984: 120). He describes Voltaire's use of carnival forms as laughter reduced to bare mockery. . . its force is almost entirely deprived of the regenerating and renewing elements," (1984: 119).

cyclicalities were very present in boys' play scenarios, death or destruction always setting the pretext for change and transformation into yet another variation. I am not claiming that aggression or competition is absent, but that aspects of cooperation and coordination are also integral to both the enacting and retelling of violent play scenarios, to a much greater degree than is observable at a distance, and that cooperation and coordination makes these activities creative and regenerative, as well as violent.¹⁸ Boys can play or tell these scenarios endlessly, and that is only possible because boys are willing to take the part of the destroyed, as well as the destroying, and perform both roles with gusto. An instance of both the cyclicalities of the scenarios and boys' willingness to embody or personify the destroyed as well as the destroyer is Greg's contribution in the above segment. Referencing *Jurassic Park*, the marauding dinosaur is now trapped in amber on the head of a walking stick and appeals for help to escape this state of death, which is also, potentially, a state of rebirth. McLaren and Morris (1998: 118) come closest to exploring these dynamics and "the affective mattering maps" of children's violent play scenarios in the context of the other forms of violence in their lives, family violence, violence organised in sports, community violence, to their overall understanding of violence and ability to distinguish between varying kinds and degrees of violence.

CONSEQUENCES

INTEGRATING DISCOURSE TRANSITIONS FROM SPEAKING TO WRITING

Given the possibility of these extended meanings and purposes of "violence", I return to the larger questions of a higher order of violence, violence done to the ethos of culture as a whole, which it is claimed post-modernist popular culture inflicts. Do schools have a responsibility to help children integrate meaning to counteract the splintering effect of commercial culture? Can classrooms open up a space in which the celebration of meaninglessness can be reworked into celebrations of communally generated and understood meaning? If Bakhtin's analysis can be appropriated, the

¹⁸ Limón, (1996) using Bakhtin, has explored the possibilities of solidarity within violent word play for a group of economically disadvantaged adult men. His analysis is relevant here.

key to transformation would be participation, activities that give children the chance to produce rather than gaze or pose, in which, through acting, they decide the significance of their actions in a sustained dialogue. What is significant about the classroom processes I observed is that not only is popular culture permitted into the classroom, it is engaged with in a number of different ways, and the children are given the opportunity to examine and integrate meaning drawn from it in a number of different ways. Ms. Heath's classroom can be distinguished from the one Alexander criticises for its loose adoption of informality in order to serve democratic pedagogical ends. In critiquing the lack of structure in that class, he asks, "Does a commitment to democratised discourse necessarily and inevitably entail the removal of the cognitive structures by which children's thinking is supported and advanced?" (2000: 507). In Ms. Heath's class a range of differing discourse possibilities were available to them, in which children could assert differing levels of agency and borrow from varying degrees of structure. It is my sense that this mixture of discourses and structures enabled children to integrate ideas about culture and their place in it as cultural producers. When they enacted plays, they assumed the role of expert; in the feedback sessions afterwards, they had to negotiate meaning. Correspondingly, in the story telling activities, they had to share the performance in increasingly complex ways, and, in the critique following the activity, they questioned more explicitly and thoroughly the components of their performance. Moving along the continuum from spontaneity and agency to more supported or scaffolded activities, the previous activities are balanced by brainstorming sessions before writing tasks are commenced, which follow the standard IRF pattern of teacher-pupil interaction much more closely, and by whole class and group work activities that attend specifically to the technical proficiency of communication, using standard textbooks. In other words, a balance of enabling and limiting uses of language are made, modelling the transitions and translations so that children have examples to build their own translation bridges. Materials gathered from a further activity, interview extracts, and test results, suggests that this transformation was at work in Ms. Heath's classroom.

Following on from several story-in-the-round oral activities, it was decided to try a written version. Literally the exercise was repeated, with children writing down their contributions to stories on pieces of paper passed around. The exercise required them to read contributions so far and then write their own in a short amount of time. One might have thought this would be a very difficult task that would result in very confused stories. That was not the case. Children were able to read the

contributions, make their own, and then switch to the next story, much like one does when one switches channels. They were quite adept at switching channels mid-story. This exercise gave rise to some of the most tightly structured, sequentially sensible stories that I collected. The activity was done in table groups of five or six, each with a mixture of ability and gender. Nearly every contribution took the story a significant step forward. Throughout the exercises the children had been experimenting further with appropriating actual people into the story, not only teachers, but each other as well. At the same time as children managed to carry out this linear task, they also managed to use the exercise to carry on side conversations. Actions done to one of their characters in one of the versions circulating would be redressed by reciprocal actions, usually brutal murders or tragic accidents, occurring in another story. What does this tell us about the power and sophistication of borrowing, and how it might more usefully be tapped into in classrooms?

REFLEXIVITY AS GAINED AWARENESS OF TRANSITIONS

Climax and resolution were distinctly missing from the stories or written assignments produced earlier in the year and became much more evident in this set of storytelling activities. This increased ability to sequence a plot transferred onto paper. One could see evidence for this in the stories they produced at test time as compared with those at the end of the previous year. In addition to recording whole class activities and interviewing individuals, I sought and gained permission to access nine of the students' portfolios representative of gender and ability levels in the class. These materials included the test materials produced at the close of my research time. When I analysed these texts by the same criteria I used to categorise the first stories in the year, I found that I had to create a new category. There was a distinctly new element present in the texts, in literally all of them, across all ability levels. At some point almost all the stories report the internal thoughts and/or feelings of the main character in the story.

The marking guide for the exercise lists as a criteria for the highest literacy proficiency expected, level C, a text that, "describes some related personal feelings or thoughts." Though the texts showed a variation in ability to meet the other criteria for level C, they all met this one. What this criteria measures is the level to which the purpose or meaning of literacy is being evidenced.

Figure 5.2 Spring Writing Test Texts (nine samples across ability range)

Non-starters: only a line or two of text		Inconclusive: texts which do not easily fit into any category, mostly because the lack a clear climax or resolution		Meandering: Descriptive texts with little causal linking between sentences or expressed agency		Passive Coherence: texts with causal links between sentences in which violence is enacted upon a passive child		Reflexive Coherence: texts with causal links which include internal thoughts and feelings as part of causal cycle		Active Coherence: texts with causal links in which violence enacted upon a child is actively responded to by the child	
G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B
								5	2		2

What was the reason for this dramatic shift in pattern? Does this style shift indicate a new kind of agency asserting itself? or awareness? Why across all ability groupings? Is this the impact of letting them think aloud and borrow from each other and their teacher? Vygotsky’s claim that what happens on a social, inter-mental level then becomes internalised on the intra-mental level seems clearly relevant.

A review of the test texts from the year before shows that the most able student was already including thoughts and feelings in her story, but in this year’s story they are more tightly worked into the plot line and impetus for action. The text she wrote this year integrated internal thoughts and feelings into the primary motivation and action of the story:

. ..some people where trying to steal my rabbit Thumper. I knew I should do something, but my heart kept hurting inside. I thought about this carefully and finally realised I had to help. . . (Clara)

One of the texts, which evidenced less command of grammar and punctuation, nevertheless, provided internal thoughts as the evaluation component in his story about a fire at his house in the night:

My face was wite (crossed out: the next morning) I was thinking it was a dream at first. So I said "Jame was that a dream?" "Was what a dream" said Jame. "the fire thing!" "NO!" said Jame.

Everything was black in my house!!!! (Simon)

In this excerpt there is a mix of reporting internal speech (his dream) and thoughts and comparing them to external speech. One of the only texts that does not fit into the reflective category seemed to be moving in that direction, in that, although it did not report internal thoughts or feelings, it did put evaluative statements implying feelings and thoughts into the mouths of the two main characters:

... My friend seaid "Well done you hero you saved a scaird stif cat and a famly!"

I sead "So did you. You came to me!" ... (Chad)

In reference back to the texts earlier in the year, one can see a strong pattern shift from a situation in which the evaluation or "so what" is significantly absent or only obliquely implied to a quite sophisticated coordination of this component with all the others in the story:

Figure 5.3 Categorisation of first story text assigned in the year:

Non-starters: only a line or two of text		Inconclusive: texts which do not easily fit into any category, mostly because the lack a clear climax or resolution		Meandering: Descriptive texts with little causal linking between sentences or expressed agency		Passive Coherence: texts with causal links between sentences in which violence is enacted upon a passive child		Active Coherence: texts with causal Links in which violence enacted upon a child is actively responded to by the child	
G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B
1	2	2	2	7	2	1	6		3

CONCLUSION

LIAM'S INTERPRETATION

Finally, I want to turn at length to an interview segment with one of the students. Much of the material presented deals with intent and interpretation, but so far has dealt with it only obliquely. The children's own analysis of their intent or interpretations has been implied or inferred. However, in this interview Liam shares quite thoughtfully about the topics central to this chapter, the interface between school and popular culture, his preferences for stories, and the processes with which he engages stories and games, and how all this relates to his future. I have truncated the conversation to save space. What is more visible in the complete transcript is the extent to which Liam guides his own thoughts, and speaks of topics as they come to him, without much prompting on my part. It is for this reason I have chosen this text. These same topics were covered with other children interviewed, but in those interviews I introduced the topics more directly and could not be sure how strongly this led the conversation.

B: Do you think about what you're gonna do
when you stop going to school/

Liam: Yeh, I think about it
and
I really want to be a computer game designer B: chuckle
that's what I want to do

B: what do you think you have to be good at
to be a compu-
Liam: maths
B: maths?
anything else
Liam:ehm
ehm
maybe
like computer studies
somethin like that

Liam then describes fairly accurately what a computer studies class might be like, evidencing perhaps the familiarity he has gained with secondary school from both his father and his older sisters' experience. It is interesting that this, his first response, is mathematically and technically oriented. I probe his response to see if this career goal has any other connotations:

B: what about your imagination

do you need a good imagination?

Liam: (quickly) yeh, you need a good imagination
but I got plenty of imagination
from all my other games. . . .

B: from all your other games?

Liam: Ehm play station games, you know

B: Oh

so your play station games have given you good ideas

Liam: Yeh,

(lengthy description of a game)

ehm, well I've completed most of the game

so I know what they're basically about

and like the endings and all that B: oh right

and well

I think

if I was a computer game designer

the endings would be better

B: what?

Liam: the endings would be amazin

we//ehm really hard B: Yeh?

cause like

you know

things are like

you don't want it to be--

we lived happily ever after.

We want somethin like

more like,

did the team do quick enough?

or did you--

did the bomb go off? or

somethin like that . . .

Here Liam begins to relate criteria he has developed for himself. He is contrasting them to the standard narrative ending seen as appropriate for children, and the predominant scenario, reinforced through Disney, of the obligatory happy ending. It is interesting that he talks about what "we want," not just what he wants. His response makes me wonder about his criteria in contrast to the criteria for stories at school. When I ask what might be relevant from school experience, what he cites as an example is neither math nor computer oriented. I am surprised that he brings up stories, particularly his tone of voice, that same voice of uncovering something usually suppressed or that goes unrecognised, sort of conspiratorial:

B: do you think things you are learning here at school
will help you be a good computer game designer?

Liam: well stories (with emphasis)

would help you

like ehm

maths would help

I don't know why
 B: why do you think stories would help?
 Liam: Cause like it builds your imagination
 like
 if you like
 like the teacher reads out things to you, like
 say
 she wants to read out
 some stories to a class
 it gives you--like
 yeh I think about that
 and maybe
 and all that sort of stuff
 when you write stories
 your
 your brain just goes on to the story
 and
 you think about
 think about all these things that are being said in the story
 you think
 like what they're about
 and what happens . . .

Liam then goes on to explicitly refer to the multi-plot dynamic by which I had become so intrigued. For him at least it is not unintentional chaos, but a chosen preference. More explicitly than his first reference to standard children's literature, this time he borrows its voice, in order to parody it, before breaking off into his own voice, excitedly indicating he would like to mix and match. Just what he is mixing is clear only in the visualising he is doing in his own head, which his words only vaguely gesture at:

Liam: normally
 but
 I sometimes think
 like
 wher--
 what should it be about
 cause like
 if you just do the thing about
 this little princess went to the market (sing song voice)
 and this little piggy went to get some steak and
 that
 it's pretty boring
 I want to make it like
 ehm
 with all the stories that I ever hear
 I want to try and make
 a little bit of that in it (emphasis to signal contrasting
 scenarios or images mixed together)
 and try and make a little bit of it in it
 so it's more interestin B: mix em up?
 Mix em up

and
get bits of
like two bits of stories
sometimes one
sometimes three
sometimes
twenty nine!

RESEARCH INTERPRETATIONS

As Shuman observes in *Storytelling Rights*, the rights to a story or its direction and meaning are tacitly understood and require subtle negotiations and constant reassessment of entitlement, (1986: 1). This chapter has reviewed some very complex and subtle negotiations within the twists and turns taken in a variety of stories. The teacher's awareness and use of story make this process transparent and open to negotiation and reflection. Children not only had the opportunity to imitate the teacher, but they also took advantage of the opportunity to imitate each other, to build up criteria for narratives and to practice accomplishing those skills. This is all the more remarkable given the emphasis on standards and testing which often necessitates the retrenchment (Maybin 1994: 148; Taylor 2000: 31) of a construction of the child as compliant and subservient.

Is the dynamic in Ms. Heath's classroom all that unusual? Several researchers and educators who have read drafts of this chapter would say it is. No one would assert that children come to school with a blank slate, yet, much of the structure and routine still implicitly reproduces this assumption and precludes inclusion of their expertise (Maybin 1994; Simpson 2000). In Alexander's analysis of democratic pedagogic practice in an English classroom, he raises a concern that while one can be fairly sure that continuity and progression in curriculum content will be followed up, one cannot be so sure that there will be continued attention to insuring that, "the pupils' discourse repertoire will be extended in the direction of genuinely dialectical discussion." Whether that happens he concludes, "is a matter of chance" (2000: 481).

I would say that the chances that teachers at the school described here will follow up on their progress both in discussing and integrating popular culture into their own cultural production are better than average. A review of the portfolios revealed a tolerance if not encouragement of popular culture had been part of their earlier schooling. The *Simpsons* feature in not a few of the previous stories, which the

teacher obviously approved of enough to include in the portfolios, which are representative of the school as well as the child's progress through it. In speaking with girls, but also some of the boys, it was apparent that last year's teacher had introduced the medium of poetry in such a way that they often turned to it as an expression of empowerment and enjoyment. The connotations of poetry were of freedom in the use of language rather than a restriction of it. Both girls and boys turned to it as a medium of expression throughout the year.

This kind of playful activity suited Ms. Heath's personality and leadership abilities. She was able to allow the students in her class this amount of freedom of expression, in part because of the respect and acceptance she had gained from the students for the limits that she did set. It has not met the needs of all the various learning styles or literacy identities equally. Gender issues within the dynamics of this class raise many questions. The material presented here confirms Davies (1997: 27) observation that girls are more adept at joining in with boys and, therefore, are more "bi-cognitive" or "bi-modal" than boys are at adapting their participation to girls' preferred styles of play. Unfortunately, fieldwork material allowed for much more of an exploration of boys' perspectives than it did girls'¹⁹ (Howe 1997). Had there been more time, it would have been interesting to repeat the writing story in the round activity in gender groups.

If educators are not to ignore or suppress children's intense immersion in, and subsequent identification with, popular culture but find ways of constructively engaging it within the classroom, examples like Ms. Heath's bear careful consideration. It is important to note that, although I would cite this classroom episode as an instance of empowerment on a personal level for the children, it must be said that the interaction does not go as far as critical educator Giroux (1992) would like educators to go in terms of encouraging student's critical awareness of genre differences and the power and ideological constructs within them. In fact, this activity could be seen as co-opting and corrupting popular culture's resistance potential. The purpose of this chapter is not to prove an argument but to open up a process of dialogue and reflection that will continue through the next three.

¹⁹ As Geertz (1973) in his description of Balinese Cock fights was, I fear I have been seduced by the thrill of the chase.

Given that children may have grounds to resent or resist the structure that school imposes upon them, can children be said to employ meaningfully such tactics as Bakhtin ascribes to carnival?—with such intent? As Lanclos (2000: 67) argues in her study of children's playful working through of loyalty issues in Northern Ireland, the underlying meaning of children's activities should not be underestimated²⁰ just because they take the form of play. She argues that, "adults frequently fail to see how children deal with societal issues such as prejudice, economic realities and even death, because adults recognise what children are doing as little more than "just play"." Giroux (1992) comments that it is precisely the pleasure of these activities that make them powerful shapers of identity. The mix of pleasure and learning is complex.

In reference to the set of questions delineated in the methodology chapter, what has been learned about children's narratives, the kinds of characters, their interactions within them and the structures of their texts across various mediums? What stands out is that children express more agency when they borrow the personas of popular culture characters, then when they narrate their own lives. The narratives change shape depending on their use and context so that they are much more sharply defined when they are used to debate, than when they are used to play. Play narratives do not have clear endings but take on the cyclical characteristic of carnival forms. Summarising these points leads to a further question: what, then do these narrative constructions tell us about the metaphors and constructs of education and children? As the Santa discussion highlighted, the image of the child as an innocent is drawn upon by both adults and children. Yet, the discussion also indicates that children selectively adopt this image among other images for a number of motives, strong among them the sense that playing this role is a means through which they acquire access to the toys and technology that enable them to engage and embody a very different role, one of agency amidst powerful flows of information where their "cyborg" abilities are tested. As Gee (1999) reminds us is true of discourse, it is not the case that one image supersedes another in a staged progression, rather these differing images or roles co-exists, odd or paradoxical as that may seem.

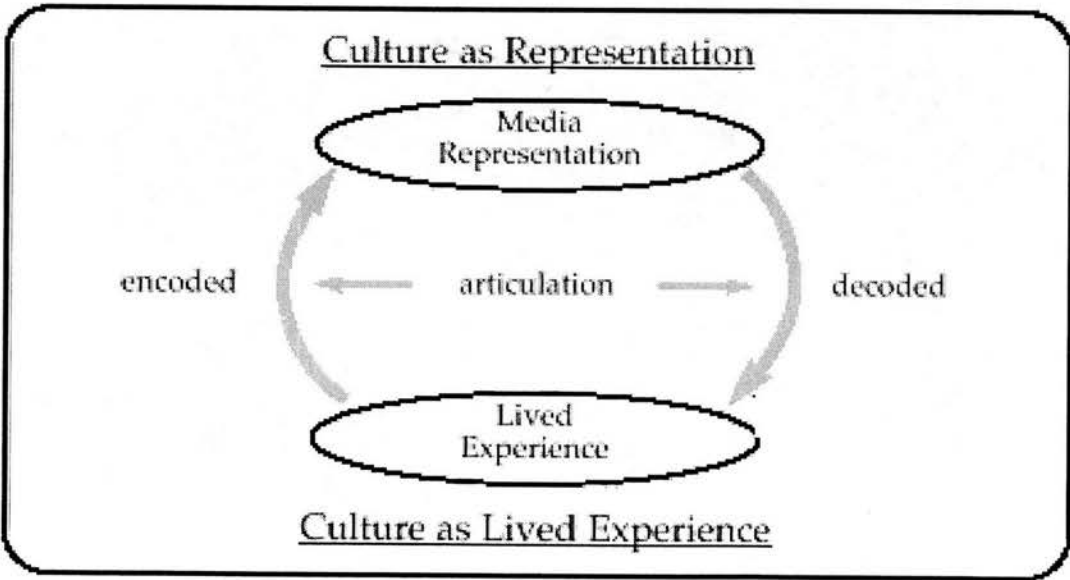
²⁰ The involvement and agency of children in political issues, in fact, the impossibility of insulating children from them is well argued in Stephens (1995) and Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998).

At issue in this mix is a point that serves to link issues raised here with those that will be raised in the next chapter:

It will probably be better to think of cultural imperialism as a much broader process of cultural change which involves the media among other factors. . . it may be possible to think of this impact as a shift in the balance of forces in the "dialectic" of culture-as-lived-experience and culture-as-representation; of people coming to draw more on media imagery in their constructions of reality. This process, however, proceeds as part of a whole range of other changes in the way in which people experience their lives; living in cities, being dependent on large-scale capitalist industry, experiencing their lives as divided into a number or discrete "spheres". These changes may be described as the impact of capitalist modernity. (Tomlinson 1991: 64)

In this chapter, I have explored several different activities which help children move from culture-as-representation to culture-as-lived-experience, thereby enabling children to explore their agency in cultural terms. These themes will be taken up again as the focus of the study turns to the setting where issues of cultural imperialism have a heightened relevancy, but where also the meanings of culture-as-lived-experience and culture-as-representation have a long history of intricate interaction.

Figure 5.4: Articulation Cycle



Source: Tomlinson (1991)

CHAPTER SIX:

THINKING, DUBBING AND COMPETING: THE DISCOURSE CHOICE OF 6B BOYS

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will look at the tensions between oral youth culture and scripted constructs of literacy and assessment as they play themselves out in a particular rural Jamaican classroom. Bryan, who has done extensive work on literacy for the Jamaican government, notes there has been a shift in the Jamaica's Ministry of Education and Culture's (MOEC) definition of literacy from an earlier, book-based concept to one that includes a "nod", in her words, to social and life skills: "Literacy includes critical understanding, problem solving skills and oral-aural abilities" (1998: 56). In a Jamaican context, what are the problem-solving skills, critical understandings, and oral and aural abilities one needs to engage meaningfully with one's community and society? This chapter addresses the interface between the official culture of school and popular culture at the borders of a particular classroom. In what ways are literacy skills, as more broadly defined, encouraged or suppressed in this classroom?

CONTEXT:

PERSPECTIVES EXCHANGED IN A RURAL JAMAICAN SCHOOLYARD IN POST-DEVELOPMENT TIMES.

The cultural and educational interactions examined here took place in a community that diverges along small lanes from a main commuter road to Spanish Town and Kingston. It is not a deep rural setting, but you can see deep rural on the next ridge and hear its Sunday worship services and occasional street dances. Facing the other way, down steep slopes of abundant growth of coffee, breadfruit, banana, cocoa and mango, one can catch glimpses of the surreal bright blue of the Caribbean Sea

and occasionally the large palatial ocean liners, symbols of first world opulence, that float like mirages on the horizon's edge. The school is located directly across from the post-office in the largest expanse of level ground for some distance. Both institutions serve as important meeting places and gateways to a wide, national and international diaspora of community members.

In the course of fieldwork, I became attuned to marked generational differences in attitudes towards and beliefs in the values of the development discourse symbolised by the school.¹ On one level there is a general awareness voiced in a number of different narratives that the community survives in a post-development era.² Older community members speak with pride of the past educational accomplishments of the school, the doctors and lawyers living abroad and now nearing retirement age. Younger community members, teachers and parents alike, informed me that the community used to have a fairly consistent water supply, used to have a paved road that did not dissolve into rubble for miles at a stretch, used to have a library and a health clinic, used to have a functional manse and resident minister. One way and another, through reduced government spending, withdrawal of aid agency support from local projects, the changing loyalties of political parties with resources, and even the after effects of Hurricane Gilbert, the community's infrastructure and thereby its sense of direction has crumbled. The way out or up, of progress, has lost its linear character and has become fragmented into divergent, concealed, contingent, survival strategies—much more a matter of chance and

¹ Since the early 70's Jamaica has faced a series of economic setbacks. Whilst some education and health indicators continue to improve, relative to the rest of the Caribbean Jamaica's indicators across a range of sectors have declined, so that Guyana in many cases is the only country with worse conditions. UN figures for 1997 indicate that the per capita consumption in real terms continued to fall both in Jamaican currency and US currency terms to 586 US\$ per year. The Jamaica Sustainable Development Network estimates that unemployment levels for 1996-1995 were above 16% with a decline in total numbers in the workforce that indicates migration as well as unemployment continue to affect the economy. They also estimate 34% of the population were living below the poverty line, this figure rising to over 34% in rural areas.

² Meeks (1996) terms the condition of the declining power of the state, the two political powers and the national economy as "hegemonic dissolution" in which the colonial oligarchy whose power and control remained remarkably stable is finally beginning to lose its grip.

relational networks than adherence to a stream-lined modernist ideas of educational advancement³.

To these conditions there is an ambivalent response. As belief in the linear construct of progress has become more difficult to sustain, the relationships formed in its pursuit become strained. Teachers complained that parents spent money on their own clothes to attend a street dance rather than on educational supplies for their children. This narrative was condensed to the tropes of book and dress, which had only to be mentioned in passing, to convey the implied criticism. Parents, on the other hand, complained that teachers were not as dedicated or resourceful as they once were. "They don't stick their necks out as they used to," according to one local observer.

Both groups narrated that the compact that once held, whereby a child disciplined at school would have that punishment confirmed, if not repeated, in the home, no longer holds. The narratives of success that had currency, of those who successfully migrated to Britain and saved over a working life at service sector jobs, in order to afford to retire back to Jamaica in their old age, now competed with the images that more youthful returnees from the U.S. were able to project. The shiny four-by-four chrome laden vehicles, were, often as not, left to speak for themselves.⁴ Here I am making no claim about actual numbers of migrants either to Britain or America, but the shifting prevalence of representations of such journeys. I overheard echoes of these ambivalent narratives in the boys' tendency to emulate American accents, particularly that of Walker Texas Ranger, and, on the other hand, parody the Queen's English as a means of resisting authority conducted through this dialect.

³ Several factors that contribute to rural lack of development are reviewed by the World Bank (1997), chief among them a lack of commitment at government and corporate levels to address the needs of rural development and small holder economy.

⁴ A narrative of this latter American migration offered in *Born fi Dead* (Gunst 1996) has had an uneasy reception in Jamaica. Yet similar oral versions were recounted to me on a confidential basis several times throughout the course of fieldwork, in some instances by young professionals who clearly contrasted their own career choices.

LANGUAGE USE UNDER THE GUANGO TREE⁵

My interest in understanding those for whom literacy, as defined by the MOEC, does not become operative, meant that I spent quite a bit of time with a particular group of boys who had failed the grade four literacy tests. Consequently, they had spent one year in an intensive "sheltered"⁶ reading programme and were now in their final year of primary school.⁷ What I came to understand is that Standard Jamaica English (SJE), modelled on British English, and the scripted literacy, which is the medium of school communication, does have value for these boys but very little use. School hours, which take up a large part of their day, force them to negotiate with this form of literacy. However, the group of boys with whom I interacted through the course of this study employed several strategies to minimise use of SJE in written or oral forms. Their use of SJE was primarily for relational, rather than cognitive purposes⁸. In other words, they did not use SJE in the forms it is conveyed in the school context to reason or creatively communicate, but rather as a means to avoid confrontation with authorities, to ring fence their autonomy by as minimal a show of compliancy as they quite adeptly assessed they could manage.

I do not mean to downplay the importance of SJE. Relationships are very important in a community where distribution of resources is as much to do with relational

⁵ The entire front yard of the school was shaded by a large guango tree whose spreading branches and roots often replaced the roof and benches of the indoor classrooms.

⁶ The "shelter" programme is part of the new assessment policy. Teachers receive special training and support for this remedial programme, which has a strong emphasis on building self-esteem, teaching word attack skills and reading for information strategies. This year made a big impression on the boys. They constantly referred to their shelter teacher as their best teacher and referred to her lessons when citing important things they had learned at school. They repeatedly made attempts to sneak out of their present class and rejoin that class. Across the schools I visited the Shelter Programme was administered, and implemented very differently.

⁷ The majority of boys of this age were in the lower stream class and had failed the literacy four test. As is the case across Jamaica, the gender divide widens as education progresses (Parry 2001). Chevannes (1999) is at pains to distinguish boys' under-participation from under-achievement, but the two are intricately linked. Jackson's (2002) analysis of underachievement and boy's self worth defence strategies may be pertinent to this situation.

⁸ Wertsch (1998) makes a similar contrast between cognitive problem solving as typically understood in traditional studies of cognition and social problem solving as mediation means of changing power dynamics.

networks as it is with the rational, technical disbursement of funds from employers, either in Jamaica or abroad. The kind of relationships that SJE played a role in, however, were ones held at a distance, possible future relations, in which they were asked to believe, more out of respect for their elders than based on any clear evidence. The actual veracity of anything said in SJE, i.e. the content conveyed, was not what was important; rather, it was the form itself that students were made to feel they must give respect. This situation, as pointed out in chapter three, strains the educational wager that Bernstein (1977) sees children as having to make. As Bernstein points out, the demands on children where home, community and school discourses are convergent, are far less than in situations where the discourses diverge.

The divergent pull of competing loyalties surfaced very early on in my engagement with the boys. A cluster of active boys centred around Jeremiah⁹, who in many ways could be said to be a leader in his class, though not one of whom the class teacher, Mr. Noble, approved. When his name was suggested during elections for class monitor, Mr. Noble diplomatically steered the class away from that choice and forestalled elections. One day, as I was helping students complete an assignment, this boy asked me to check his work before he handed it up to the teacher. I reasoned out loud the logical steps that I thought he had taken in making his spelling choices, checking with eye contact that I was interpreting him right. We had our heads bent like two people might do over a map¹⁰ that a stranger presents to a local person, in order for the local person to point the stranger on her way. At one point I reasoned out why he had spelled them, 'd-e-m', "that makes sense, that's the way you usually hear it." The validity or logic that I recognised in his work caught his attention. He raised his head quickly, and shot me an uncharacteristically direct look.

Because of the leadership role he seemed to play, particularly among the more active boys in the class, I asked him to talk to me, and gave him the choice of picking a

⁹ All the names in the text are aliases. During fieldwork I asked the boys what names they would like me to use in the text. They were proud to assert the names they were commonly known by in the community. It is with reluctance that I have retreated to the more established practice of aliases, however following Erna Brodber's (1988) example in *Myal*, the names are meant to signify in a similar way.

¹⁰ "The territory that defines the object of study is mapped by the ethnographer who is within its landscape, moving and acting within it, rather than drawn from a transcendent, detached point" (Marcus 1998: 392).

friend to speak with him, if he wanted. He effectively chose an interpreter for himself, a youth whom I knew well because our yards opened out on to each others'. Jeremiah, the group leader, would hone his response to my questions down to one single word, rather than engage in the difficulties of conveying what he meant through the channel of English grammatical structures so at odds with Patwa. His close companion, Samuel, who knew both SJE and this particular foreign researcher better, and for whom, I imagine, SJE had markedly different connotations, would fill out the responses as best he could, though he himself was often restricted to simple present subject-verb constructions. Re-listening to the tape of this early conversation I was often struck at just how effectively Jeremiah's one word answers condensed what he wanted to convey with a similar artistry to that of Haiku poetry.

Early in the conversation the boys quite easily gave their assent to the school motto: "Hard Work and Education are the Key to Success"¹¹. At the end, after their teacher has reclaimed the many boys who had slipped out of class to join the conversation they repeat their allegiance to the motto. This assertion is not inconsistent with what transpires in between; rather, it seems simply incommensurate, unable to be judged on the same terms. The middle of the conversation voices quite different strategies than the motto suggests.

Our conversation had begun in desks near the school walls. As the tape recorder was picking up the gusty chanting of the nearby class more than Jeremiah's reticent answers, we moved further away from the building to the guango tree. At this point we became visible to the boys who remained in class. This precipitated a process I was to become quite familiar with as it inevitably happened every time I tried to speak with one or two boys from the class. That simply was not how they grouped themselves. First one, then a few more, found excuses or simply the opportunity of the teacher's turned head to leave the classroom, and, moving slowly so as not to draw undue attention to themselves, began gradually to drift over to the tree until a clump of seven surrounded the conversation. The boys gradually and silently decreased the distance between themselves and the centre of the conversation. Once they established a perch, they waited silently and intently followed the conversation. Their very presence changed the kinds of responses the two original interlocutors made, their silent participation moulding, in Bakhtin's words, the

¹¹ It is important to note that this motto reinforces the metaphor of education as one of possession, a precious one that is locked away and kept out of reach.

speaker's choice of utterance, slowly shifting it from a centripetal genre to one with more centrifugal force. In the heat of discussion, a more adamant portrayal is given of the more realistic means of success than that the school symbolises, the taxi and mini van business, which actually requires no literacy whatsoever, given enough other more salient, cultural capital. This contest of verbal wit and manipulation of valued cultural symbols arose out of my attempt to understand the use of literacy outside the school grounds.

Exploring the differences between how they learn in school versus how they learn out of school, I asked, which did they like more, learning inside or outside of school? In contrast to his earlier monosyllabic passive responses, Jeremiah made a concerted effort to disagree with his friend, persisting through five interjections, marked in the transcript, to overturn the values previously acceded to. In this excerpt Samuel is again in the midst of asserting that reading and writing is better, as I try to understand if there is a distinction between what he likes and what he considers good:¹²

B: But which did you like doing, which kind of learning
do you like doing?

Jeremiah: bi-- (1)

Samuel: I learn to read Jeremiah: sometime you have to fight (2)

I want to read and write Jeremiah: No miss
(3)

Read and write.

B: I'm asking what you like better, I'm not asking—

Samuel: read and write

Read and write

Read and write

Jeremiah: Sometimes yo— (4)

B: You like reading more than—

Samuel: Fighting

Jeremiah: Sometimes you have to fight

(5)

B: You scared to fight?

Samuel: Yes miss Jeremiah: mi no scared to fight!

Samuel: No miss, No miss

Jeremiah: I Always ready to fight (knocks fists with an onlooker, both
grin big)

Samuel: Always ready

B: You're always ready for fight?

Samuel: Yes Miss

B: Are you always ready to read?

¹² Throughout the transcript there are several instances of simultaneous speech. The boys often managed to speak in between each other's words or as a chorus. When one boy's speech is actually broken off by another's intrusion this is indicated by a dash.

Samuel: Yes miss

Jeremiah: Yes miss, always ready for everyTING!

Jeremiah has definitely scored points with the way he has been able to manoeuvre between the choice of images. He manages to give reading a subordinate value within a street credibility value system. He does so again a few minutes later, as I try to explore what the practical benefits of reading could be after school. Samuel first asserts it is exciting to read big words, but, when I ask for an example of something he likes to read, he gives the name of a local folk tale, which is echoed around the group. He then begins to chant a refrain from a local oral tale. When I ask will they read when they get out of school, Samuel asserts that he reads the Bible at church and at home. Jeremiah, however, offers that he will read a magazine and then goes on to extend the image. He will sit, legs propped up on a desk, and have the leisure to read because others will be working for him. In this way he converts the act of reading into a symbol of power over others. Reading is not an instrumental means to success but an accessory to it, a status symbol. The implication, which he quickly spells out, is that it will be these boys who will drive his cars and get no pay. The words are barely out of his mouth before a storm of refutations fill the air. At this, the bounds of interview become irrelevant, and I become superfluous; the conversation is amongst themselves as each boy asserts it will be "mi" for whom the others will work.

Ezekiel: Miss, miss, mi go send him out to work
an' he can look at the money
till his eyes pop out
he naw gonna get any! (laughter)

AN ALTERNATIVE SYLLABUS OF SOCIAL AND LIFE SKILLS

The two assets that boys depicted in the above excerpt as being most crucial for their real success, strength and cunning, are not valued and learned within the curriculum of the formal education. Nevertheless, the school remains an arena for learning on the periphery of the school day. I observed them devoting their most concentrated efforts to three different kinds of learning. In class, I consistently observed their response to assignments as that of developing strategies to borrow valuable resources from each other through stealth, collusion, coercion, or bargaining. The object of the lesson itself seemed unimportant. In the process of aiding them in assignments in my accepted role as "walking dictionary", I became aware that the

object of the lesson rarely seemed to be absorbed or understood. What was worked at was getting as many answers as others had, or as similar a response, cannibalising and refitting whatever the topic may have been to suit the more salient local requirement of peer relationship maintenance.

As quickly as possible the boys turn from this show of compliancy to other pursuits. These pursuits are arenas for learning important social skills in a dynamic network of relationships which also demand critical thinking skills, one within the realm of math and applied sciences, the other in language arts. As teachers explained to me, the boys of the school had their self-determined "seasons". As school commenced, the season at hand was marbles. In the flick of an eye, or a second of a teacher's inattention, the boys of the class would become immersed in the highly ordered application of geometry and physics that marbles require. For my part, I never tired of watching the many different stances the boys would take to accomplish different shots, using their bodies to brace their shooting arm. The endless bouts required swift calculations of angle and spin and careful choice of strategy from a number of possible scenarios.¹³ The schoolyard version is subdued compared to the marathon sessions carried on by older boys on the road. In these sessions, the underlying physics is over-layered by performance art. The bantering and boasting associated with dominoes is also practised and perfected in this past time. I have watched as boys from the class stand stock absolutely still for hours following the tensions and triumphs of the proceedings. The verbal battlefield is as important to monitor as the physical one. Should the bantering increase in intensity and boast become dare, and dare become threat, it is imperative to scoop one's own marbles up the split second before a protesting player ransoms all of them--but not too soon, lest one be seen to have unnecessarily lost one's nerve, thereby forfeiting one's place in the game.

¹³ The game is different from the British one as described by Bilger (2001: 205-248), and like the American version incorporates elements of golf and pool.

Figure 6.1: Marble Season



Another important pursuit is also an emulation of older males. Often carried out sotto voice within class, it is a celebration of the poly-vocal embodied expression and imagining of Dancehall lyrics. At every level of semantic analysis, from phonetics to syntax to overall discourse shape, this form of expression, highly accomplished in its own right and requiring a high degree of linguistical, rhythmical and physical co-ordination, deviates from the acknowledged language of social advancement so overtly prized. According to Cooper, "The sing-song of fixed rhythmic structures conspires to obscure meaning."¹⁴ However, she continues:

¹⁴ Peterson (2001: 6) also remarks on the changing ways that youth in a different context are engaging with and reading culture and the new forms of literacy this gives rise to in his

If you permit your ears to become attuned to this borderline sound and allow for the free-play of the intellect, then patterns of meaning cohere, and a framework of analysis of both socio-linguistics and literacy may be constructed. (1993: 136)

The lyrics also turn upon key images deeply embedded in everyday life, and represent a thinking and arguing by metaphor. The power of these metaphors resonates in the lives beyond the school gates:

Tell a gal you no beg
An' you no sponge
A gal 'ungry, cyan¹⁵ buy her lunch
Comin like stale crackers, loose every crunch,
Not a bag juice, much less a natural fruit punch.¹⁶

Jeremiah spent quite a while one day relating some of the lyrics to me, insisting that I spell them right, using Patwa terms not English. He corrected me when I wrote "they" instead of "dey". After several minutes of this activity, in which others inevitably join in, Jeremiah told me, in conspiratorial tones, "this is the wickedest song in de world, de wickedest." It was difficult to read the mixture of emotions and attitude he conveyed by this description. They are meant to be impressive, but just what kind of impression his face does not betray:

Zoom Zoom cut ina two
half ah fi mi, half uh fi you
if a gal a go giv' it away
no wrinkle or screw
just remember zoom zoom
cut in two.

For those who maintain Dancehall has lost any grounding it may have had in the spirituality of Rastafari, these lyrics are eerie proof that the stories of Rastafari, with their heavy emphasis on the lineage they trace back to Solomon, are still evoked. This depiction of chain-sawing an unfaithful girlfriend in two alludes to Solomon's own solution of dividing a child in half. The use to which they put this

analysis of *Yizo Yizo*, a controversial South African drama series, which borrows its visual imagery from the genre of the music-video format as well as its soundtrack from kwaito, an eclectic form of South African rap.

¹⁵ Can't

¹⁶ Bag juice is the cheapest children's beverage, mainly a sugar water solution. Fruit punch with its association with the ital diet of Rastafari, has entirely different connotations.

trope, its gravitational spin, has much more to do with the realities of survival in Babylon than the ideal of I-n-I.¹⁷

In contrast, a second set of lyrics were related to me by the boys of my neighbourhood one evening while they were messing about in my kitchen with a drum, trying out rhythms, making up lyrics, improvising with other surfaces to add accompanying rhythms to the one based in the drum. Using a well-known pop ballad expressing an idealised gender relationship, the boys concoct a very different scenario depicting how love is expressed in the gendered relationship they themselves have experienced with a prominent female figure in their lives—their grandmother:

One, dissa make you understand
Two, dissa a make you doo doo
Three, boy, you muss respect your granny
Four, when I done gonna give you more
Five, boy, you still dere alive
Six, boy, you not stop get lick
Seven, boy, dissa hell and a heaven
Eight, boy, you come in late
Nine, boy, you do it all the time
Ten, fi you an you dutty friend dem

(after the pop lyrics:
One like a dream come true
Two I want to be with you
Three like a fantasy
Four like a one two three
Five I fall in love with you
forever and ever,
believe my words to you.)

In this composition the boys practise making the same metaphorical twists to comment on their lived reality as do the Dancehall DJs that they admire. As boys learn the lyrics of their favourite DJs, they go through several stages of approximating the broadcast lyrics. Lines that they don't completely know, they improvise, and, sometimes, the improvisation sticks and remains a preferred version that they perform alongside the original.

¹⁷ I-n-I is a key expression of the immanent cosmology of Rastafari. Forsythe (1985) has a very insightful analysis of Rastafari reworking of images and metaphors to form an empowering iconography.

As Jeremiah related lyrics to me, I pointed out that while we do this, he speaks fluently, not like he did the other day during the interview when he gave one word answers to my questions. Why the drastic change? He says with emphasis:

because mi 'ear it every day,
up on the road.
Mi ear it every day
In my bed . . .

This is said with the same rhythmical emphasis as the lyrics he has been dictating to me, and from this assertion he slid back into them, like a diver into his element. The rapid-fire delivery of complex sequences of syllables is in stunning contrast to the monosyllabic or utterly mute responses to communicative tasks within the classroom framework. Permitting one's self to switch between this free-play framework of Dancehall and the more linear structures of education based discourse is precisely the thorny problem of translation that both teachers and students have difficulty negotiating.

When I press the boys as to why they so readily turn their attention from school tasks to these activities, they insist that they do so only when they are confused. My initial scepticism of this explanation had to be reassessed in light of continuing dialogue with them and further classroom participation.

CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION: LESSONS IN TRANSMITTING CONFUSION

THE KEY TO SUCCESS

The School motto is part of an important genre that frames the school day. Devotions that begin the school day often had as their centrepiece some parable or "gem" that conveys a similar rationale and belief code as the school motto. Devotions are not a monological affair. As well as the Bible verse, prayers, repeated phrase by phrase, and the national anthem and pledge, there are also the performances of spiritual songs. No hymnbooks are needed for these; students catch on by word of mouth and participate avidly in the motions and gestures that accent the choruses as well as the more routine movements which sustain the rhythm of the activity. These performances were an intricate blend of two distinct rhetorical forms, call and response being one, call and completion the other. Call and response is strongly anchored to the church culture of testifying what one knows for and from

within one's self to be true. It is a rhetorical form that has opposing cultural connotations to that of call and completion/repetition, which is a foreshortened variation of IRE, in which the teacher raises her or his voice at the end of a statement, pausing for the class to complete it in chorus, thereby indicating their ability to guess what the teacher would have said. The emphasis in call and completion is on reproducing truth externally dictated. Devotions seemed an exercise in channelling the enthusiasm created by the former testifying kind of interchange into children's investment and participation in the second form of interchange, with mixed results.

As children filed away in class lines from this outpouring of song and dance, the gems literally hang over the children's heads as they entered their school rooms, sometimes being nearly the only decoration in the room, carefully printed in coloured marker on poster-board above the slatted screen-less windows.¹⁸ Often they were part of the curriculum delivery, a language arts exercise consisting of children being instructed to copy the gem down into the workbook. Mr. Noble, in his quest to get children thinking, went further than this and assigned them to translate the gem into their own words. The results, however, revealed their reluctance or unawareness that they could do so. The gem they copy down for one such assignment reads:

If a task is once begun
Never leave it till it's done
Be the labour great or small
Do it well or not at all.

Reviewing the thirteen responses that had been handed into the teacher's desk to be checked, I easily had a sense of who had been sitting next to whom as the assignment was completed. Copying, including spelling mistakes, was a common coping strategy. The boys who frequently joined me outside class all handed in various versions of this phrase: "you mose (must) not stop in the middle of it

¹⁸ Children are not the only ones in the school context who subvert or reinterpret texts and practices to reflect local perspectives. Alongside the official gems for children's edification, there are teacher versions. Some also seek to inspire such as: "The mediocre teacher tells, A good teacher explains, The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." Next to this, the Devotion Rota and a PTA notice is another thought for the day: "ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CHANGE: There is something I don't know that I am supposed to know. I don't know what it is I don't know and yet I am supposed to know. I feel I look stupid if I seem both not to know it and not know what it is I don't know. Therefore I pretend to know it. This is nerve-wracking since I don't know what I must pretend to know. Therefore I pretend I know everything." These two "thoughts" together say much about where teachers see their practice as located, between local role model, and Ministry employee.

(work)." The children did not use their own words, but merely supplied more of the same from what they deemed to be a safe repository of similar sounding phrases.

One boy literally created another version in the same rhyme scheme:

when the work is on the land
you never leave it till it done
when you are working at a shop
you must not leave it till it done. (Micah)

A process by which they defined or compared definitions of words, comparing life experience with the meanings of those words, simply did not happen. They passed. None of them tried to reason what the second part of the gem meant, "do it well or not at all." Nor did they query what the gem might be saying about choosing which tasks one takes on. The option of not doing something because one can't do it well, wasn't a viable option in this setting. This kind of text was simply not open for discussion—it was beyond the bounds of their critical assessment. The boy who often acted as my intercessor and interpreter gave the lengthiest response, in which it is possible to see some process of interpretation going on. What is clear is that he was associating the text with what else he knew his teacher expected of him:

when I am doing my work I most (must) keep workey(working) and
leson(listen) to my teacher what she is saying. She say that when I am doing
my work I most keep wokey all the time she is not ther and when people come
then we most be workey. (Samuel)

THE CLASSROOM ISLAND OF LITERACY

Student's suspension of thought was highlighted most acutely during one social studies session towards the end of the first term. Whilst this conversation was going on, the higher class was busy chanting the specific place names of mountains, rivers, and other geographical landmarks around the globe. However, the disparity between shouting out, "the highest mountain is Mt. Everest," and, "bodies of water are divided into continents and islands," may not be as striking as it first seemed to my ears. Both classes were simply repeating what they thought they heard, regardless of relevance to real lived experience; only one was doing so more accurately and in more detail.¹⁹

¹⁹ Both can be said to be engaging in "institutional thinking" (Douglas 1986), whereby "an answer is only seen to be the right one if it sustains the institutional thinking that is already in the minds of individuals as they try to decide". (Holstein and Gubrium 1998: 149)

Mr. Noble was aware of the changing pedagogy discourse, and the pressures to educate children "for the 21st century". Within the physical constraints of the setting, he made a variety of different attempts to contextualise the curriculum delivery for students' life experiences. In the lesson described below, Mr. Noble is making a particular effort to encourage them to question and think critically about their surroundings. His first attempts to elicit questions meets with one ironic question from, commenting on an earlier accident in the schoolyard:

"I wonder why Tobias broke his hand."

Mr. Noble chooses not to respond to this question. Silence and increasing inattention are the only other response. Undeterred, he persists:

Mr. Noble: "You must learn to ask yourself questions about things. You may not have been practising, but this will 'elp you. Ask yourself certain questions, and I would like to suggest some of the questions you would like to ask yourself, 'What is happening?'"

He turns and writes this sentence on board, "what causes this to happen?". As he does this, he asks the class, "What are the 'wh' words?".

Mr. Noble's activity of writing on the board signals powerfully to the class. Legs, elbows reverse their sprawl, eyes are forward. Having been asked to give a concrete response, which draws on their practice of repeating grammar drills, they readily comply. The class springs into competition mode. A forest of hands shoots up. Before Mr. Noble can formally call on anyone, voices call out over each other, amplifying and echo-ing, "When", "Where", "Who", "Why".

Mr. Noble struggles to get in edgewise, "Very Good!" as he writes their contributions on the board. Striving to sustain the momentum gained by this activity, Mr. Noble seeks to turn their attention to the social studies lesson: "All right, we are going to do social studies in a while. These are some of the questions we are going to ask ourselves."

The process of handing out the government provided social studies textbooks begins. This being a primary opportunity for demonstrating one's status in the class, a fight breaks out over who gets to distribute the books. As this settles down, Mr. Noble attempts to draw everyone's attention back to the topic he wants to pursue. He tries to transfer the competitive energy to a contest related to the topic, "Stand up and say what you remember from last time." The initial response is not encouraging: Mr Noble: "Anybody? Joel? Naomi? Nobody remembers?"

The disbelief in his voice tacitly dares his students to prove him wrong. The boys are aware of this opportunity to compete, and finally one comes up with a contribution. Micah: (in choppy reading voice): "Land masses are divided into two groups, oceans and seas."

Rather than passing judgement on this statement, Mr. Noble invites the class to respond; "did you hear him?"

However, it seems they do not hear a challenge to engage their critical faculties, but a command to evidence their continued conformity. The class dutifully repeats in choppy monotone, "land masses are divided into two groups, oceans and seas," word for word with calm dutiful acceptance. After all, what Micah has offered sounds likely enough, delivered in SJE. Mr. Noble himself does not betray any surprise at this statement of fact, rather, he begins to probe their acceptance, "do you agree with that?"

The class choruses: "Yes sir."

How he would have dealt with this impasse, I do not know, but at this point Mr. Noble hears a dissenting voice and uses it as leverage: "All right, Ezra, repeat what you have to say."

"Water is divided into oceans, seas and lakes," asserts a small reedy voice.

Mr. Noble puts it to the class, "Do you agree with that?"

A boy behind me calls out "yes" however, the rest of the class does not seem very interested in Ezra's response. Mr. Noble encourages them to repeat the corrected form of the statement. He meets with very little enthusiasm and has to coax them into the drone, which they eventually produce, though fewer voices join in. At no point does any one seem to notice the dramatic change in the conception of the world this substitution makes. Mr. Noble himself obviously thinks better of pointing this out as well. He continues towards his goal of getting them to ask questions, "Anybody else have anything to say about oceans?"

Joel puts his hand up, "there is land more than water." This is directly challenged by Ezra, "sir, there is water more than land."

Jeremiah, in a voice more for his own benefit than as a bid to join the classroom wide conversation mumbles, "water more than land, water more than land." His voice trails off repeating in rhythm what could be a refrain. He does not follow the next exchange, and I wonder if, in fact, he has gone on to link it with other lyrics in his head.

There is a certain reluctance in relaying these notes. The dynamics are difficult to gauge. It is quite likely that the reader will wonder why the researcher does not see that the students' responses are tongue in cheek, deliberately designed to goad the teacher into exasperation. Had I not sat beside students struggling to come to grips with basic vocabulary in numerous exercises, had I not witnessed how quickly anyone who makes the slightest mistake is pounced upon with shouts of "idyat!", a sarcastic reading might seem plausible. Such a farce would require the collusion of the entire class, requiring co-operation across lines of allegiance difficult to cross.

They are in earnest and continue with similar responses until Mr. Noble points out that the text book can be used to check the accuracy of the statements:

Hosea: "The continents are called oceans."

Micah: "Yes sir"

Mr. Noble: "Where did you find that?"

Hosea: "Page 31, Sir."

At this point the written text provides the continuity for the talk exchanged in class. Those with books seem to be following along, looking at the figure that depicts more water surface than land surface. A large part of the class either does not have a book, cannot lean far enough over to see the one their bench-mate has, or suffers their bench-mate's inability to find page 31.

It seems in this excerpt that Mr. Noble is attempting what, in Wertsch's analysis of teacher discourse, is termed to "up the ante"²⁰. In Vygotskian terms, he is trying to get them to mimic "intermentally" and then internalise "intra-mentally" a process of habitually asking the text questions. This is a process central to the broader definition of a critically engaged literacy that many critical educationalists advocate (Giroux 1992; New London Group 1996; Crowther and Tett 1998). At the same time, he is nudging them towards, not just SJE, but a particular kind of scientific vocabulary, subtly rewarding those who do. The kind of interaction he is modelling for the class, which he labels as, "just using our imaginations", clashes against the more entrenched forms of school discourse such as repeating "wh" words that they have learned by rote.

Mr. Noble asks, "does anyone want to stand and read the text?" This is essentially a call to arms, and refocuses the boys' attention on the competition to be chosen to read. Amos reads, Nehemiah and Jeremiah interrupt at his slightest mistake and plead to be chosen to read instead.

At this show of lack of co-operation Mr. Noble changes tack and suggests, "All right, you listen while I read, 'larger areas are called – ' his voice slows and rises. He waits for them to chorus. This form of interaction is familiar. They know what to do and comply with the chorus: "continents".

He continues "Small areas are called," he waits raised voice in expectation; they comply "islands".

²⁰ As Wertsch characterises this common strategy by teachers, "they constantly 'test the waters' to see whether students can move to a new level of self-regulation. When students fail to meet these semiotic challenges teachers often return to using directives that require less on the part of the students, but this is usually followed by subsequent attempts to 'up the ante' once again" (Wertsch 1991: 113). Such an analysis relies on a Vygotskian understanding of a zone of proximal development or interaction between teacher and student.

At this point, he breaks off, modelling the behaviour he would like them to engage in: "I wonder, what do we live on?"

Jeremiah anticipates: "Island"; the rest join in: "Island."

Mr. Noble encouraged by this response reads the next sentence, "large sheets of water are called--" The class choruses: "Oceans".

Again, Mr. Noble finds in the sentence an occasion for a question, "why do they call it sheet? What exactly is it?"

Micah calls out, "blanket of water!"

Mr Noble doesn't hear him. The rest of the class are free associating with every predictable phrase that comes to mind. One girl calls out , "pan of water". Another girl associating further from pan calls out, "baby!" The responses have verged into the area of Jamaican proverbs, something that is culturally salient. The one spontaneous act of critical thinking that I am able to detect takes the form of some of the boys laughing in response to these girls.

Mr. Noble ignores the direction the class is taking and insists, "I bet if you think, put your thinking caps on."

Micah calls out "blanket!" He is shouting, but still Mr. Noble doesn't recognise him, though this seems to me the most logical analogy given throughout the class.

Another boy calls out, "body !"

Micah repeats "body!" as if he has spied the winning answer and hopes to be given credit for it.

Mr. Noble seems again not to have heard him and addresses the first boy: "That's exactly right."

Inexplicably, Mr. Noble accepts this answer. I am baffled, as I don't see how this has explored the analogy of sheet at all, and in fact comes closest to affirming the girl's offering of "baby". The wrong strategy seems to be reinforced here. Perhaps, by this time Mr. Noble himself is willing to settle for an approximation of inquiry, what sounds like co-operation. If he goes beyond the limits of ambiguity or confusion that his students can tolerate, their sense of frustration may undo any of the ground he can sense has been gained. After all, the word body does appear in the written text in association with water, and that is justification enough.

The irony of this turn of events is heightened as I hear Micah mutter sullenly to me, "I was right." He turns towards another kind of activity as compensation for his loss. He sips from a bag of free milk, which he has hidden inside his shirt

Mr. Noble continues reinforcing the success he claims for the class: "Very good, a large body of water. See what happens when you put on thinking caps? You come up with the answer!" (Source: Field Journal D: 39-45)

In reviewing the overall flow of this particular lesson, I am struck by the occasions when attention and energy became concentrated. Twice there were openings where Patwa descriptions broke into the discourse. When Mr. Noble redirected these responses towards the text and SJE there was a dramatic drop in energy. In response, Mr. Noble attempted to regain their attention by offering a form of competition. This strategy gave rise to problems of its own. As the boys' desire to compete drowned out the lesson content, Mr. Noble reverted to a more traditional form of classroom interaction, that of call and completion. He then used the sense of cohesion this created to return to his attempt to initiate questioning, or at least answering questions independently. Yet these efforts did not seem to be enough to bridge the gap.

It is not that this lesson is evidence of lack of students' thinking capability, rather, it points to a belief or a decision that thinking is NOT actually required in this setting. In stead what seems appropriate to them is a very circumscribed kind of guessing, and Mr. Noble will continue to have a difficult time persuading them otherwise. My over-riding impression of this session, and many like it, is that the content itself has as little meaning as a globe of glass does. What is important is how one can out-manoeuvre one's classmates with it. If one can get the teacher's approval or attention first, regardless of with what, that seems to be the major criteria for success or failure. It is about securing or maintaining a relationship, an appearance, not about an internal state of knowing or learning. Yet there is resistance to overtly acknowledging the importance of competition, as if there is a vested interest in hiding it from each other or from adults. Here, as throughout the study, the importance of indirect communication in the culture of Jamaica, of not saying directly what one means, challenged the simplification process of analysis.

THE VIEW FROM THE TEACHER'S DESK

It is important to examine in depth what both sides of the interaction bring to the struggle. Many ethnographies (Fordham 1996; Ferguson 2000) which seek to valorise the voices of children, do so by collapsing the depiction of the adults in the school arena into one-dimensional characters, often negative or obstructive characters. This strengthens the argument they would make for the importance of children's voices. It also hides the very problems of communication between adult and child that need to be understood, if impasses, like those in this class excerpt, are to be effectively addressed.

Though Mr. Noble has made some gains in habituating the class to a different kind of class interaction, he has also reinforced some students' negative patterns of interaction. Yet from this depiction it is also clear that Mr. Noble is making critical and reflective assessments of several factors in the class with almost every single spoken intervention he makes as he teaches. This is consistent with how Mr. Noble described his own sense of what he does as a teacher in interviews. In the four times we spoke about his work over the course of the term, he always stressed the importance of reflecting as he teaches, that he builds the development of any class lesson on their input. He described himself as, "sitting with my students, talking with them, (developing my teaching) based on their responses". He thought too much importance was placed on lesson plans, which he said actually limited one's ability to respond to the class.

Taking a step back and analysing the class room interaction from a broader perspective, I noticed, from the order of assignments that he gave over the course of the term, that he did not strictly stick to the suggested curriculum, but reinforced concepts that students seemed to be struggling with. He used the written feedback he received, in the form of the lessons they handed in, to plan his next assignment.

Several assignments also reflected his concern to contextualise lessons. He used the anniversary of Hurricane Gilbert to prompt a writing assignment on hurricanes. Another day he called on their love of the local fast food, patties, to create a story. One math lesson was couched in terms of marbles lost or won in a game.

In class he responded to issues that arose to make them the topic of an assignment, obviously doing a great deal of thinking on his feet. Yet, these efforts did not seem to be enough to bridge the gap. It may have to do with what he recognised as

thinking on the part of the students. He seemed caught between encouraging critical or creative thought, which often comes in spurts of Patwa, and maintaining orderly discourse in SJE. He describes his attempt to get them to think:

I am trying to get them to self discover. I do so little telling because it doesn't help them. I ask so many questions and I find our children are not accustomed to being asked, they are accustomed to being TOLD! . . . They are not able to write from their experience. They have such difficulty putting their thoughts into writing. I don't know if it's difficulty with language. They're just AFRAID to.²¹

Yet within the same conversation he told me, "I always insist on SJE," while voicing his concern that of late they seemed to have more trouble with it, that "it simply is not in their brains." The problem, I suspect, is how SJE is "in their brains", why they believe it is supposed to be there, and of what use it is supposed to be. Their borrowing of SJE seems a very partial one. It is as if they are borrowing a shell, as a hermit crab does. They are not attached to it, and use it only tactically instead of absorbing it into their core identity.

Bryan (2001) makes a similar observation about students' partial adoption of SJE in her research in Jamaican classrooms. As Bryan (2001) has pointed out, call and response has deep roots in African Diaspora culture and many uses. What makes call and response distinctly different from the similar speech pattern, that of a very traditional education practice of rote learning by call and repetition, is very much to do with the implicit understanding and agreement between speaker and audience signalled by prosody and other extra-linguistical markers. These subtle differences, however, make all the difference to the experience of the exchange. In this case, Mr. Noble signals the responses he would accept to his call needed to be in SJE, preferably in keeping with scientific discourse.

According to Gumperz, institutions or groups construct patterns that constrain as well as construct what kinds of replies and therefore thought processes are acceptable.²² It is plausible that Mr. Noble's attempt to enlarge the classroom discourse to include the critical thinking skills of a broader definition of literacy is confusing to the children. At the same time that he signalled that they should use their imaginations, he also told them they should do so in SJE. As subsequent

²¹ This quote is represented in the same style as excerpts from field notes, as the interview was not taped, but transcribed as it happened.

²² Douglas' (1986) work on "institutional thinking" makes similar claims.

discussions with the boys of this class reveal, these two requests imply a contradiction.

By his repeated questions it was apparent Mr. Noble wanted his students to think and to engage with him. Yet when they began to describe the world as they see it, in their own words, he resisted their responses, encouraging them to follow Ezra's example and use SJE. Significantly, he asked for a response that is a generalisation, a theoretical construct. As Cole (1992) and Wertsch (1991) argue, this is one of the key conceptual shifts education is supposed to convince learners to make. However, these students do not seem to be persuaded. Instead, their response was to repeat specific instances, building up a collage of narratives or possibilities not so easily reduced. In particular Jeremiah took phrases from the lesson, and instead of internalising their use to carry out scientific inquiry, explored their poetic and metaphorical value. Although Mr. Noble did not verbally criticise their Patwa, he did not have to, they could draw on many past experiences in the school setting to interpret his more subtle signal to copy Ezra to mean they are not speaking, and by extension, thinking properly. It appears they desist from doing both.

Taking on board Gumperz' work (1982), which shows that participants of differing status can have differing interpretations of communication exchanges that clash without becoming apparent, it seems not so strange that the dysfunctional class experience perpetuates, even ingrains, itself. The differing understanding and uses of the discourse in this class excerpt are never overtly addressed. The situation is not dissimilar to the one Michaels (1981, 1986) examines, in which African-American children have their discourse patterns ignored by middle class white teachers, or the misinterpretations that Heath's (1982) seminal work examines.

What are the modes of communication, the meta-linguistical tools, that would help Mr. Noble bridge the differences between his and his students' use of SJE? There are two bridges to be built, extending in opposite directions. Mr. Noble needs a bridge to the academic discourse (Bryan 1998; Bogle 1997; Pollard V. 1998; Cooper and Devonish 1995), which increasingly engages with popular culture and language heretofore denigrated and dismissed. He also needs a bridge to those now creating the next generation of that popular language and cultural expression, his students.²³

²³ This analysis is not intended as a critique of Mr. Nobles' individual teaching. In fact, without the commitment and clarity of purpose he demonstrated, this analysis would not be possible at all.

The kinds of deep conceptual changes needed to bridge these peripheral spaces would have to address the historical fracture that exists between content and form in Jamaican society, a fracture deeply ingrained in the language and identity debates and even more deeply ingrained in survival strategies that have been reproduced and reinforced by the stark inequalities of the society from slavery to present day (Nettleford 1970; Braithwaite 1971; Beckford 1982; Burton 1997; Stolzoff 2000).

Delpit's (1999) analysis of the dynamics of cultures of power has bearing here. What may be required is not a technical fix, which Ogbu (1998) and Wertsch (1991: 146-147) have quite rightly criticised, but an opening up of dialogues about language and the power and cultural dynamics that drive and shape language differences. Bryan's recommendations seem quite apt:

(Educators) must draw on what the learners already know. The transition from one form of language to another is easier if the children are made aware of the differences and if they are given the opportunity to manipulate the sounds of the language in real but playful contexts. They need to develop metalinguistical awareness about the rhythm of language, all languages. (Bryan: 1998: 62)

However, as Bryan notes herself, given the place school holds within societal structures and its role within the development process, there are several kinds of resistance that would make a more playful approach to language, no easy task. It is not encouraging that Bryan's suggestion, in fact, reiterates very similar ones made by Craig (1971: 379) three decades earlier.

Although Mr. Noble had just returned from in-service training specifically to do with reading and language, he, the most adamant of all the staff, insisted that teachers needed training in dealing with language differences, and that, to date, he had received none: "Something has to be done for our teachers, run some seminars, because they don't understand how to deal with this problem," (Field Journal C).

His response indicated to me that the growing academic discourse on language at Mona campus had not been accessible to or recognisable by him as useful. What are the possibilities for extending the bridge in the other direction, towards the meaning structures of his students?

Mr. Noble's discourse in class often seemed at odds with the boys; however, in other circumstances he called on the same discourse and performance strategies as they did. Jeremiah's response, when Mr. Noble asked what do they wonder about, is a

piece of practical contextualised thinking, a very important question about relationships and dangers on the playing field surrounding the school: "why did Tobias break his hand?" He was not seriously offering it as a helpful part of the classroom discourse, but as a critical commentary. And Mr. Noble ignored it. Yet in other contexts he employed the same strategy himself. At staff meetings Mr. Noble took on the same role of bad boy, carnival jester, that the boys disruptively enacted in his own class. In the staff meetings he did so, also to be critical, to challenge the pointlessness of form for form's sake and the counter-productiveness of Ministry of Education policy. I can't help but think that he did so for another reason, that playing this role in the relative safety of friendly colleagues who laugh gently at his performance, actually gave him a chance to work through what he is dealing with when he faces the boys playing this same role. The Principal conducting the meeting did not respond as if her role was seriously being challenged. She often passed over his remarks with indulgent silence, sometimes smiling despite herself, as she continued to read from policy documents, or, in some other way, advance the business of the meeting.

At the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) meeting he played yet a different role, acting as a mediator between the official structure of school and the network of informal relationships that make up the community of parents gathered. In contrast to the formal agenda printed on the blackboard and the official discourse initiated by the chair, Mr. Noble broke in with informal comments early on in the meeting to establish a different basis of relationship within the purpose of the meeting. At the initial monthly meeting of the school year, he alluded to shared experience, saying that the school cannot do it all, the school needs the parents in-put, the teachers, after all are only foster parents, "we are (parents) in the day, we hand them back over to you in the evening (Field Journal E: 64)." His interjection received quite a positive response, many people spoke spontaneously, voicing their assent by echoing his phrases or expanding upon them. Despite the continued adherence to the formal agenda, complete with lengthy readings from Ministry of Education documents, it was only in these breakaway comments, that he and another teacher made, that parents engaged and responded. In this setting Mr. Noble does effectively communicate, for the most part still maintaining SJE dialect, but, in the images he selected, drawing on local knowledge and values.

VISUAL AND SCRIBAL PRIVILEGES

In order to understand how Mr. Noble might engage with the boys in his class, a closer look at the variations in the roles that they take on is beneficial. Do they ever take on other strategies than those they enact in class? Do they enact the critical literacy that Mr. Noble holds out to them in other circumstances?

In stark contrast to their bland indifference to the liquid or solid state of continents, I have listened as Jackie Chan's stunts are minutely studied and hotly contented to be, "True!" or "Untruth!" They talk at length and with humour about the tricks the TV can play to make the watcher think Jackie Chan has dealt a blow, when it is just sound effects. When I press them further about how or why they think many action stunts are faked, they draw a parallel between what they know in life to what they see on TV:

B: But who told you that or how did you figure that out?

Samuel:-----miss

B: Do you know
how you figured that out?

Nehemiah: Because,
how we cyan do it
And dey can?

When I hear them making careful distinctions, reading the TV much more critically than their text books, I can't help but conclude that this says something about arenas, in which they feel they have choice and can engage thinking faculties, and situations in which they do not.²⁴ The form of argument or reasoning with which they engage the medium of television, is very different from that which is recognised and valued within the education system.

In the painstaking process of transcribing several conversations with these boys, listening to the changes in voice, the emphasis and repetition of key responses, I realised they were arguing by image and instance, instead of making the switch to the generalisations of schooled discourse, which I was more accustomed to and subconsciously privileging. This became evident to me in a conversation, in which I

²⁴ Cooper has observed that "as anyone who has attended the cinema in predominantly oral societies like Jamaica, will attest, film is an art form, in which an open ended dialogue with the narrative/visual text is transacted," and goes on to argue that (film) "provides an oral equivalent of the interpreting of written literary texts," (1993: 96).

tried to get a feel for how they imagined the fairy tales they are often asked to read at school. Seeking to understand if in their minds they retain the European illustrations or use their own local knowledge, I ask what does Prince Charming look like, does he by any chance have dreads? Such a suggestion on my part implies a transgression. None of the boys are allowed to grow dreads. Hair length beyond a 1/2 inch receives a gentle reminder from the Principal that it is time for a haircut. The beginning of term and resumption after holiday is marked by the cleanly shorn heads of the boys. This is the most visible representation of the tension that exists between the Rastafari religion celebrated in Dancehall culture and the Christian centred norms it is the duty of the school system to inculcate. In Rasta culture one's dreads are a symbol of virility, strength and righteousness or right living. Samuel's response and the ensuing conversation made manifest to me the importance of the symbol and how the boys interpreted its ambivalent place in the community. We have been discussing ""Cinderella"" but their responses switch from the prince in this tale to the one in ""Beauty and the Beast"", at a speed I, at first, find difficult to follow:

Samuel: Yes, im full o hair

Daniel: Like im one Simba dey talk im

Hosea: Dem dey kiss

Kiss im

De girl kiss im

Daniel: Kiss im

Hosea: And im get better

Daniel: And change up

Everyting change up!

That talk of dreadlocks was immediately associated with a lion, all be it the Disney version, is no coincidence, the lion being another important Rastafari symbol. It also signalled the fluid transition between different genres portrayed on television that the conversation will traverse. Having latched onto the image of powerful hair, they left ""Cinderella"" far behind without indicating the switch. Throughout the rest of the conversation strong images guided the flow of the conversation as they sampled similar scenarios across movie genres, moving seamlessly from pornography, to action films, to comedy. Their recounting of scenarios changed depending on how many had seen the film. If it was several of them, they each contributed a phrase, inserting them with perfect timing in between each other's words. The story was filled in from several different directions, demanding that the listener open their attention out, instead of focusing it in one direction or on one voice. Neither did they begin at the beginning, but, as it were, cut to the chase, seizing on the most dramatic or larger than life images. If they dwelt on a particular movie for more than a few

exchanges, it was to go back and fill in what was seen as the less important images that may have come earlier in the plot or later.

After sampling both "Cinderella" and "Beauty and the Beast", I asked what makes a story a good story. Their response again privileged SJE:

Daniel: like Put in good words miss

Don' bodder put in PACKa- PACKa word in dere

I then asked what stories they like. They offered to tell me "Rapunzel". The most important thing about the story, which is what they said first and affirmed by echoing each other, is the hair. "She had tall strong hair yuh know." In contrast to the symbolism of Rasta's long locks, describing a woman as having tall hair has the exact opposite connotations. Rather than symbolising a connection with Africa, they are a mark of European heritage. The common practice in the area is to imitate tall hair by having long hair extensions braided into their own hair at the roots. The image of strong hair is given first place of importance. That, in the end, the couple have a baby and the baby "favour" Rapunzel is the next important scene to convey. It is only incidentally that one of the more reluctant speakers adds, "the witch stole the baby". But once this scene is mentioned it is quickly expanded upon:

Daniel: Untrue, Rapunzel mudder and fadder ungry
and steal some some lettuce

dem 'ungry

B: Oh right

Samuel: steal some lettuce

Daniel: And de witch say
witch

Samuel: and when dem reach

say take away

What im -

Dem a Take away dem

First baby dem ave

first baby

baby girl

In a community where many children are raised by grandparents or other relatives, often because their biological parents are forced by poverty and "unger" to other parts of the island or abroad, this story touches upon emotive issues. Though it is difficult to catch on tape, what followed was two boys beginning to tell how they would resist if a witch tried to take their child. Picking up on this, I asked, "would you let a witch take your child?". The first response was a firm, "no!" However they quickly worked together to show me how it could happen:

B: what if the witch came to your door

What would you do?

Nehemiah: Hold de door!

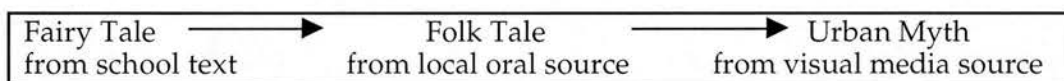
Samuel: Miss!

Fight

Daniel: Lick im down	Samuel: Miss, we never/all right
Samuel: all right	
Miss me asleep a bed	
say ere a bed, (motions to use room as bedroom)	
Miss, Lie down dere	
Hosea: miss dis a baby bed	Samuel: a baby bed (from other side of room)
Daniel: Dis a baby bed right ere so?	
And you're a bedroom dere so	
And De witch jus'	
Pull de window --	

There is much within this passage that touches upon the importance and intricacy of the local relational network, but the point I wish to emphasise is their choice of enactment as most valid form of argumentation. Without any need for Samuel to explain to them or persuade them, Hosea and Daniel joined him in demonstrating for me the local reality.

This enactment, and perhaps the interest I demonstrated, triggers another genre switch. Briefly an account is told of a local theft. The story acts as a transition from stories recounted from fairy tale literature presented in school, to the episodes they turned to next, not of babies stolen, but of girls and young women "stolen".



After they have spent some time recounting these episodes from movies, I asked them what is the relationship between these stories and the earlier Rapunzel story. Quite patiently they emphasise that they are not stories; it's a "show". They repeat the word slowly and enunciate clearly to help me out, "Show," "Show, miss". They then continued recounting adventures, that of action movies. This marked a transition from depicting those who wield weapons and implements of force, to those, Jackie Chan foremost among them, who are pitted against overwhelming force. Twice more I asked "what's the difference between movies and stories", is it what happens in each? Is it that Jackie Chan can do things they never read in books? Their response was to recount more of his adventures, emphasising that he comes in all kinds of shows, is not bound, perhaps, in the same way book characters are.

B: You're--You're telling me the story again
 But you are not answering my question--
 Daniel: but--
 B: okay, okay,

It's a good story
 But I want to know
 What's the difference between Rapunzel
 And Rush Hour Daniel: Jackie Chan
 Samuel: Rush Hour (Nehemiah makes engine noises)
 B: Which do you like better?
 Nehemiah: Rush Hour Daniel: Rush Hour Samuel: Rush Hour
 B: Why?
 Daniel: Show Nehemiah: Live!
 Daniel: Like a show Nehemiah: love watch it watch it
 B: You like what you can watch better than what you read?
 Samuel: Okay watch mi eyes
 Watch mi eyes
 Daniel: mi cyan make dat distinction when mi read! whan ma read
 di show mean dan when ah read but
 Samuel: but di show di show
 B: The Jackie Chan Show is better than what you read? . . .
 Samuel: you see when a watch up de show One Man Steady?

You see in de field a big circle miss (Samuel jumps ups indicates circle
 A big circle miss with his arms)
 Jump in de middle miss

About a tousand men, miss
 Ah right like (he pulls at friend's arms to show they come to fight)
 A Daniel come a²⁵ beat im up
 A Nehemiah come a beat im up
 A Hosea come a beat im up

Here Samuel resorts to the same strategy to make me understand as they did when trying to show me how it was that a baby could be stolen from its parents, when at the beginning of the conversation we were comparing "Rapunzel" to real life situations. He is stressing what it is I can visually see. He walks around the circle, physically taking hold of Nehemiah's arm to help me understand that in movies they actually see things happen, whereas in books . . . I am left to assume no such action takes place. When Samuel tried to get me to understand the difference, he made a visual appeal. He asked me to watch his eyes, as if the different use of his eyes that he feels on the inside certainly must be evident on the outside. They do something distinctly different with their eyes when they read, can't I see it in their eyes?

²⁵ "I"

ANALYSIS OF CONTRASTING PATTERNS

This makes me aware that in their struggle to attain literacy they are still at a point where engagement with words is a reduction to dealing with black marks on a white page (Kilgour Dowdy 1999). The transition I made somewhere in the fourth grade, in which, when I read, I no longer concentrate on the individual words but the pictures they link to in my mind, is not one they have yet made. When I read I do see moving pictures. Bearing in mind the attention that Scollon (1996: 217) has drawn to analysing the different cultural relationships within authoring and reading, I have to wonder, is what I do when I re-imagine from written word to images significantly different than moving between visual and oral imagining as Daniel, Samuel and their friends insist they do in this passage?

Listening to them, I am reminded of Hughes' (1988) sense that stories do become encapsulated in the most vivid images, that the image becomes a metaphor for the story, and that, thus encapsulated, stories take on a life of their own in a person's head, migrate or mutate into other stories, interact with them, carry out their own chemical experiments, and that this activity is the life blood of the imagination. Pollard has examined similar children's responses, contrasting them with Michael's (1986) work on topic-centred and topic-associative responses. She draws a connection between topic associative and the often criticised term "indirect response" used to characterise student's responses that wander from the standard. "Caribbean teachers label it the "irrelevant response" the "rambling response" in any case the "inaccurate response", " (Pollard 1996: 87). As this research notes in a number of instances, "indirectness" has very astute practical uses, heightening the tensions between its everyday saliency and official disapproval of it.

Pollard also examines topic associative and topic centred narratives in light of Bruner's (1986) distinction between paradigmatic and narrative ways of knowing and argues that topic associative or indirect responses are more like narrative than paradigmatic ways of knowing (Pollard 1996: 98). However, I wonder if the more image-based poetic structuring that seems to be in operation in these boys' recollections of movies is paradigmatic, but which paradigm? Their discourse could be seen as more paradigmatic or blueprint oriented. There are sequential steps in their retelling, but the overall organisation is poetic and image rather than process based. Processes are indicated in the images in condensed form. Rather than this

being a more rudimentary or simplistic structure²⁶, I think, it is, in fact, more complex. They are a complex blend of paradigmatic and narrative knowing that, I would suggest, requires a third category, neither topic centred or topic associative, but topic fractal use of narratives. Topic shifts are not precisely defined as in topic centred discourse, nor as random as topic associative, but have a rough resemblance, and, much as fractal shapes are used to create complex structures by their transposition into differing positions, so, too, these boys' stories build up a complex landscape of ethical and political reality that surrounds them by their own transpositions of images across story lines.

Comparing these boys' storytelling practices to the excerpt analysed in the Scottish school, there are important differences. The Scottish use of stories was much more fractured. Each turn switched more abruptly. Very few elements of a story, such as characters, setting, time frame carried over to the next contribution. Their practices resembled switching television channels, cutting into an entirely different programme. The Jamaican practice bears much more resemblance to the way a DJ will cut one tune into another, blending elements of rhythms from one into the next (Stolzhoft 2000). Their shifts between images and movies are more consensual, each contributing to the image, overlaying details, and through their communal commentary shaping the shift to new images. Theirs is a branched or networked topic associative style. A very different kind of call and completion²⁷, requiring much more sophisticated timing than the staid classroom version. Their depiction of the argumentation/rationale of these movies is very like their performance of Dancehall lyrics.

In assessing whether it is valid to compare the two differing activities in the different settings, it has to be noted here that I tried to introduce telling stories in the round to Jamaican children. Rather than free-styling their contributions, I asked them to take sequential turns to tell the story. They never took to the activity, not once, in any setting, at neither public, private, large nor small school. I was left to surmise that this was because they were already too accomplished at their more complex

²⁶ Although I disagree with Craig's (2001) criticism of Bernstein, which he contrasts to Labov, the use of Bernstein's "restricted code" is problematic as it does not correspond to the emic and etic features that have a more complex rather than a less complex structure.

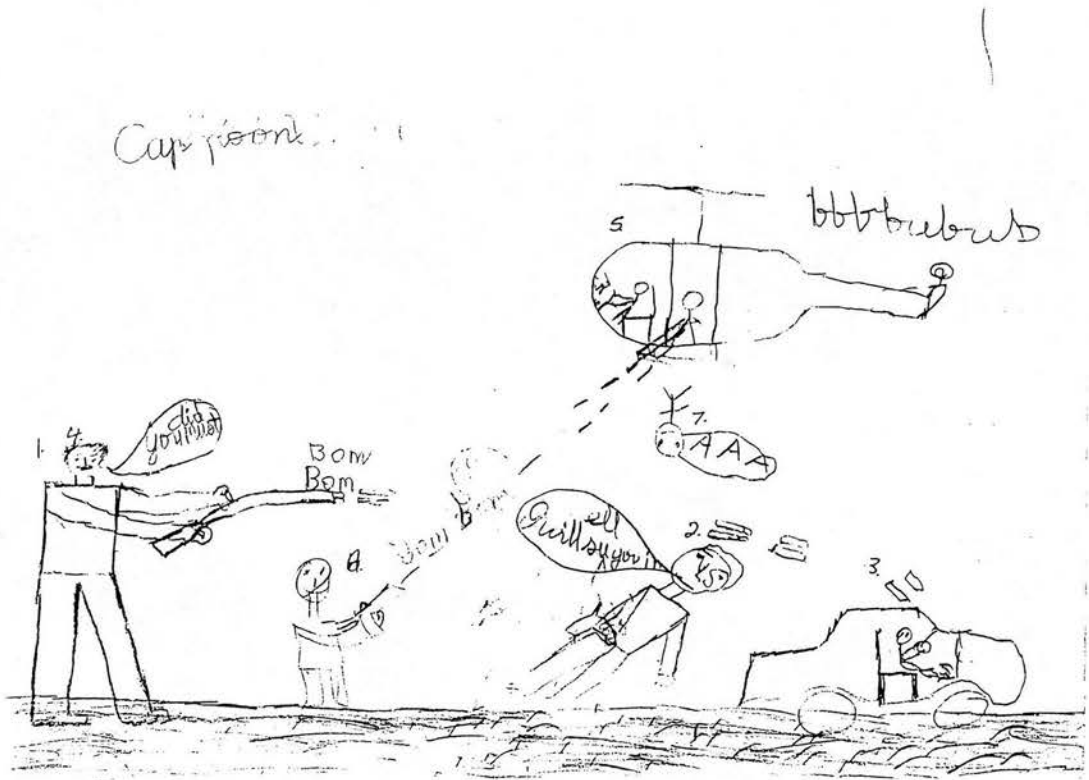
²⁷ Maybin (1994) refers to the activity of completing statements for each other within conversation as dueting. In this instance it would have to be called sextetting.

form to revert to a more rudimentary version that gave them little opportunity to use the narrative skills at which they were already quite adept. In stark contrast, the Scottish children latched on to the format and made it their own, deviating slightly from it in more informal settings, but never taking the liberty to entirely configure it as the Jamaican children did.

STORIES IN BOXES: BOUNDARY LESSONS

A third experience again re-emphasised the difference in how boys organised and understood images and the meanings they hold. Drawing on the interest some of the boys had shown in my son's comic book, I asked them to draw comic strips for me. The boys' initial and quite enthusiastic response was to draw one very complicated and quite violent scene in which subsequent actions were drawn over the top of preceding actions, rather than sequenced out linearly. When I queried this depiction, Jeremiah, who had made the most elaborate drawing, was able to show me the sequence in which he had drawn the action. This was in chronological sequence, based on causal links to what he had already drawn.

Figure 6.2: Multiple Action/Single Frame Depiction



At the end of the session some of the boys went to the front of the class and began to draw bad man characters on the board. They drew over and over the central image, accentuating the features and the symbolic significance. Again, this highlighted for me the differences between a sequence oriented conception of narrative, which I brought with me, and the more image/poetic version the boys employed. Some weeks later in an evaluation interview, one boy explained why they put the story into just one picture rather than several sequential ones. It was because they wanted the picture to fit the story, to be realistic. As Shuman notes (15: 1986) "When reading or writing we think in terms of sequential delayed communication, whereas speaking is always simultaneous." Perhaps what was important to the boys to convey was the simultaneity of their reality

Figure 6.3: Single Story, Dual Interpretation, Multi-frame Depiction

Figure 6.3: Single Story, Dual Interpretation, Multi-frame Depiction



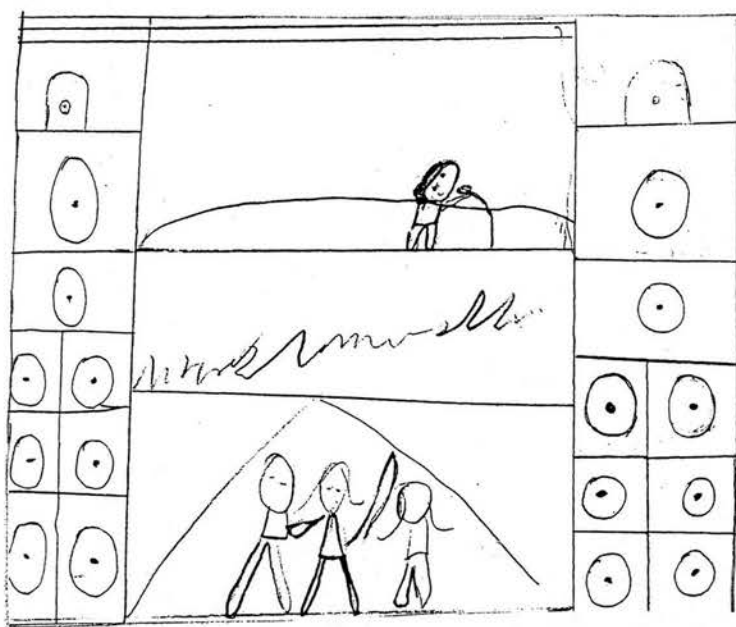
The dialog in the script is as follows, Frame One: Boy: "Mom, I came back from town" Frame Two: Boy: "I am calling long time", Mom: "I was in the room with your father" Frame Three Boy: "Yes, where is my father?" Mom: "I am going to call him" Frame Four: Boy: "I want some money . . ." Father: "Yes, son" Frame Five: stick figure in bed on one side of door, two stick figures one on top of other in bed on other side of door. Frame Six Thief: "I am going to rob this house." Frame Seven: Boy: "Mom I wake" Frame Eight: Boy: "Dad, dad, I saw a tief" Dad "Where is the tief?"

When I re-emphasised that I would like to see if they could do sequential drawing during the next session, each sequence in a separate box, Jeremiah drew a completely different story-line shifting satirical as well as sexual undertones to the details and margins of an overtly moral tale that fitted within the school canon. Daniel also sequenced out a story with a dual narrative running throughout with a humorous interplay between them. The majority of boys, however, retreated from exuberant expression into tracing an illustration exactly, although its subject content seemed completely isolated from any story line at all. The first priority was not to relate to the content but to be sure they got the form right.

Their response seemed to be starkly either/or. Either an exact copy of a form they recognised as dictated by the school, or a complete reversion into a diffuse associative style in which much of the coherence and meaning is embedded within the context and therefore implied rather than spoken or depicted. As Jeremiah and Daniel signified, even if they are capable of taking on the form, they do so

reluctantly, subtly subverting it. This should not be read as a result of their rural, secluded environment, a throw back, or last vestige of an oral past, but as much a consequence of their interaction with the developed modern urban centre, from which Dancehall emanates, carried over radio waves and on the trucks that bring the large speaker systems out to the crossroads. When I ask them to draw what Patwa looks like, many of them drew a Dancehall stage with towering boxes of speakers.

Figure 6.4: Patwa sounds like Dancehall stage



The picture depicts a singer with microphone on a stage. Dancers are visible below. Between the singer and dancers is a wavy line depicting what Patwa looks like. Either side of the stage are towering speaker boxes.

CONCLUSION: THE VIEW FROM THE TREE (REPRISE)

The comments the boys offered in my final interview with them are telling. As was our custom, I requested to speak to two or three boys. The conversation began this way, but by a slow process of attrition from the classroom and accretion around the tree, the views become not the voices of a few, but the sentiment of the group as a whole. In this interview, in which I was reviewing and evaluating with the boys what I thought I had learned, we turned to talking about the differences between Patwa and English. Again they subscribed to the view that everything is always better said

in English. When I questioned this point, "everything?" it came out that, well, one cannot curse very well in English.²⁸ At this point the dialogue erupted into several voices. The standard form of question/answer, in which myself as interviewer structures what was said, was broken. They initiated the utterances, laughing, and relating instances of foreigners trying to curse and sounding silly. Similarly, they asserted told stories are better in Patwa than in English. Interestingly, this corresponded to Velma Pollard's perception of the language divide. When we spoke at Mona Campus, she stressed a related point. In describing why English exam rates showed no improvement over the years, she explained that children are not exposed to SJE as a lived, practical language. For instance, in her view, they simply cannot imagine English being used to make fun, or be humorous, and, given that this is a major strategy for coping in everyday Jamaican life, that is a large part of life from which SJE is excluded (see also Pollard 1998). It also tends to suggest SJE is excluded from other imaginative uses, like those Mr. Noble suggested.

As I talked further with the boys about language differences, I asked, which do they think in, English or Patwa? At first they asserted they always think in English, but given time to think about what I was asking, and, I believe, coming to understand the categories I was presenting to them, they rephrased their response. It had taken some while for them to get used to the idea of being asked to think about the distinctions between different ways of speaking. As Samuel described it, he has had to pretend, "fool like", he understands what I am saying, "things he never heard of before", and then go home and ask his auntie about them, a strategy, he told me, that he commonly employs to deal with Mr. Noble's instructions as well. After consideration, Samuel told me that when he speaks in English, he thinks the thought in Patwa first, then translates to English; the others readily agreed.

They then made an interesting distinction. Some things they more readily thought in SJE, or they associated more with SJE. Math and English they said they think in English. "What about science?" I asked. "Patwa!", they quickly and assertively responded, voices echoing over each other to give emphasis to the response. Social Studies? "Patwa!" they asserted again. This response reinforced to me that when the subject was about learning the right form or formula the medium was English; when

²⁸ This inversion of the Shakespeare quote often cited in Caribbean cultural critique (Wilentz 1992), "Caliban: You taught me language and my profit on't/ Is I know how to curse/ the red Plague take you!" is telling.

the subject borders upon an application to real life, the medium was Patwa. I think of all the classes that I have sat through, watching Mr. Noble trying to engage the students' interests-- how at some point one of his questions asked about something from their lived experience, the upsurge in response, all in Patwa, the focussing of attention, dissipating quickly when his response to their information was, "is there a better way to say that?"

As we talked further about dialect and mediums for language, writing, telling, reading, drawing, Daniel said, rather mournfully, what is at the crux of the decisions they must make: "Miss if yu cyan read, yu cyan go nowhere in life."

When I asked them what is good, these boys invariably gave responses that affirmed standards. When I asked them what they like, often they expressed their preference for Patwa. It is concerning for me how little overlap there is between what is good and what they genuinely like, that the category of good does not contain much that they would identify as genuinely themselves. What is left over, outside, beyond the school standards, comes under the category bad, and that is increasingly the category they give themselves: bad man.²⁹ Regardless of what they would choose for themselves, what their own internal sense of right and wrong, hero or bully, may be, the truth of Daniel's words hangs over their heads, indisputable. Much of what they are presented with at school they may not believe, but this they do, "Miss if yu cyan read, yu cyan go nowhere in life."

In the next chapter the frequent theme of violence and its various tropes will be examined further as focus turns to the discourse practices of members of the higher stream of the class a year younger, the majority of whom are girls.

It was not that I did not engage with the few girls in the final year class, but that their experiences and sets of problems entailed much more difficult communication problems. There were social and cultural aspects to this that could have been picked out with perseverance, but they were intricately bound with cognitive problems beyond my ability to assess or interpret.

It is hard to enter the child's world. Looking from the adult perspective, the system as a whole, learned and integrated by whatever way has been managed, has a sense, a structure, that seems obvious, concentrating, as an adult does, on the paths that

²⁹ Bad man is the designation of the anti/hero in many Dancehall tunes.

they have learned to recognise, rather than its contradictions and dead ends. It is these assumptions that guide the logic with which adults teach and communicate with children. Earlier in the chapter I used the metaphor of a map, indicating that process was like a local person who knew the terrain, trying to compare it with what he saw represented on a piece of paper, in order to help the person unfamiliar with the territory find her way. It seems that often maps that children are presented with at school don't correspond with the reality children know, and as a result they lose their way. The different use of spatial imagination that the boys displayed strongly indicates that those concerned to meaningfully engage them in an education project need to reconsider their own maps, as the social cartography project argues (Paulston 1997)³⁰.

What is clear, thus far, is that the argumentation and discourse skills of these boys' within their uneasy relation to school literacy practices is that, rather than being simpler as a result of their "restricted" literacy, as Goody and Havelock have argued (see Gee 1994), to the contrary, they are more complex. A definition of literacy that does not seriously engage with the discourse practices of Patwa is still not broad enough. As Gee suggests, the role of the English teacher is both complex and critical involving them in, "conflicts of values and identities" and places them "at the very heart of the most crucial educational, cultural and political issues of our time" (1994: 190).

AT THE CROSSROADS OF LITERACY AND CULTURE

I am aware that the situation I portray is not static, like an illustration, but in motion like a "show", and that the boys move between the discourses of school and road swiftly. Holstein and Gubrium's apt reminder applies here. The boys' interpretations are not fixed but rather:

emerge as provisional adaptations of diverse local resources and conditions, serving the practical needs at hand, until further notice. Culture orients and

³⁰ Social cartographers point out "the imagination can work through spatial representation to reveal multiple intersections, to resist disciplinary enclosures and cross borders and to come into critical dialogue with other imaginations. In this process space may acquire emotional and even rational sense through a poetic process where empty reaches of space and distance are converted into meaning" (Paulston 1997: 140). Complexity theory offers to social cartography new representational possibilities. In a limited capacity, this study begins to explore the possible synthesis between these projects (see chapter nine).

equips the process but interpretive inventiveness and serendipity intervene. The process repeatedly and reflexively turns back on itself, as substance, structure and practice are enmeshed in the ongoing production, reproduction, and redesignation of meaning and order. (1998: 150)

The problem is that the practices, in the street, up on the wall, and out in the school yard, in which the boys find meaning, seem to drift further and further away from those practices for maintaining order and making developmental progress within the confines of the classroom. The latter practices seem on the verge of being shrugged off as shells empty of meaningful content.³¹

My last words as I departed the field were to Daniel, the one most likely to succeed out of his lower stream class. Recognised by most of his peers as being smart, who only recently fell from grace, he is the boy who reads anything that comes into his hands, yet is one of the quickest to fight. Small and thin, he is wiry and has eyes that flash a warning before his rock solid fists connect with their message. He is the one who realised, "Miss if yu cyan read yu cyan go nowhere in life". So I said to him, emphasising each word, "Stay In School." Our eye contact conveyed, I did not mean just that day. He, however, very subtly but vigorously shakes his head, as if ridding himself of an unwanted pest, or maybe in imitation of the dreadlocked Rasta. He turns into the gates of the school, heading, however, not for the classroom, but for the group of boys at marbles under the tree.

³¹ Taking into consideration evidence which indicates that unemployment levels are actually lower for males who do not stay on for secondary school than for those who only complete secondary school (Williams cited in Chevannes 1999), these strategies may not be as self defeating as they are decried in the press as being. Clearly, though, their strategies are at odds with those education planners (MOEC 2000) envision for them. Parry's (2000) survey of head teachers, teachers and guidance counsellors indicated that the general awareness that the labour market favoured men acted to discourage male interest in schooling.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON LEARNING NARRATIVES: A YEAR LOWER, A "STREAM" HIGHER.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes another look at the interface between school and community discourse in Jamaica, both embodied and articulated, this time from the vantage point of the students deemed to be successful, who are advancing through the upper stream of the school. In contrast to the lower stream of the sixth grade class, the fifth grade upper stream is mostly comprised of girls. Out of a class of 30, 24 are girls.

In this chapter I will look at the narratives as they emerge from conversations and class activities of class 5A, as it is referred to in the school. The 5A teacher, Mr. Lewis, like every other teacher at this school, has an approach and style that reflects his own educational experience and life journey. His approach very much influences how the class related to me, their initial interaction with me, replicating their interaction with him. They draw on experiences with Mr. Lewis during religious education lessons, which in several ways depart from the standard school routine. The critical thinking they do through story telling outside of class is much more complex than what can be expressed in the forms dictated by the curriculum. The attention and importance placed on the correctness of form by the girls, creates tensions that demand choices. The criteria for and the outcome of these choices are quite different from the ones explored in the last chapter with lower stream boys.

CONTEXTUALISING EVENTS: ON THE PLAYGROUND

Before contrasting these girls' forms of negotiation between school and community discourse, I want to contextualise the stories they related within unfolding events in the community. The events related here take place in little over a week. They are by no means typical, but record a crisis in the community, in which many of the dynamics that existed as undercurrents, signalled, if at all, in very indirect means of communication, suddenly became much more visible.

A common code pencilled into the margins of my notebooks of class observations is "fight", small skirmishes for the most part, over stolen pencils or name-calling. Often I struggled with the opposing demands of observing so as to understand the dynamic as it unfolded, and the demands of my role as responsible adult who should not be seen to condone violence, particularly bullying. The sequence of events, the narration I offer in the midst of exploring narrative's role, begins mid-week at lunch break. I am relaxing and sketching upper primary girls as they perform skipping rhymes, jotting some of the lyrics in the margins. A tall sixth grade girl is jumping while two friends swing the rope. Suddenly a sixth grade boy rushes from a classroom and tries to push her out of the space to jump himself. She pushes back and gives him a hard thump. In the split seconds this occurs, I assess she looks to be able to take care of herself and this situation does not require my intervention. I make the conscious decision to not impose. In the next few seconds, as the girl begins to get the best of the boy who is shorter than her, three more sixth grade boys, two of whom I know very well, rush in and rain down fierce blows from every direction on the girl. I am on my feet and shouting at them, shocked and outraged—surprised too as this seems to violate their own code of conduct, which I have heard them speak about. Yet, even as I am standing there, the observer in my head is still taking her notes, making ironic comments about how swiftly the researcher seems to have changed her assessment of reality and her role within it.

Soon after the bell rings, a teacher comes up to me and says, "you see why we have to beat them?" She is referring to questions I had raised at the staff meeting earlier

in the week about teachers' use of corporal punishment.¹ I am aware that my response was not to hit the boys or even to threaten to hit them, but to shame them, to refer to what is their own code of honour. I am also aware that this is a tactic I witnessed teachers use in the Scottish schools, and wonder about the imposition of this cultural transposition. In response to the teacher I make the point that the school should set an example other than might makes right. She responds that they cannot build an alternative structure, because every morning they must start over again, rebuilding what has been undone when the children go home.

Immediately after lunch I was scheduled to take a small group of students from the upper stream of grade five². This was the second session with five girls and two boys. Our meeting space was nominally the teachers' lounge; it also served as library, storage room, office and auxiliary classroom. For the sessions in this room, the group gathered on a quilt on the floor³. The girls quite readily made themselves comfortable leaning and nestling against each other. The two boys in the group sat somewhat apart. All of them either witnessed the playground fight or had been told about it. So, I started the session by asking them, do they think I should have hit the boys? Every vocal response the girls made was to assert, yes, I should have. They told me if I only talk to them, it will "go in one ear and out the other". I asked them if bigger people stop hitting smaller people, setting the example, would children stop hitting each other? Their first response was one of confusion. After a pause to make sense, no, they responded, there will always be bullies. Interestingly, none of them offered that beating them will prevent them from bullying; that is not actually stated as being more effective. The one certainty seemed to be that bullying was endemic. Bigger people will always hit smaller people. However, this was not a comfortable topic. One of the girls broke into fits of high-pitched giggles. Her unsuccessful

¹ Recently the MOEC had delivered a change of policy statement to all schools, announcing that they would no longer support any teacher who was sued by parents for physically punishing their child.

² As well as observing the class as a whole, Mr. Lewis allowed me to take students from the class for activities. These sessions were used to compare story activities that had proved successful in Scotland, however, adaptations were quickly developed that suited the children better, meeting goals they themselves defined in addition to those I brought. It quickly became apparent that more children wanted to participate, so I organised after school workshops that all could participate in without taking children away from scheduled class time.

³ The quilt and separate room were more provision than the out-of-class groups in Scotland enjoyed. The accommodation there often being the bare floor in a corner of the hallway.

attempts to quell them drew the laughter of others in the group. In a later interview, when the girl listened to the tape of the session, I asked her the cause of her laughter. She laughs again listening to herself, this time softly, gently and comments, "the bullying miss, I was laughin' at the bullying".

CULTURE AS REPRESENTATION: VIOLENCE REPRESENTED

The discussion, as it did in the Scottish classroom examined in chapter five, quickly elided into reasoning by story. What follows was a series of short tales, each exploring the theme of violence, and children's terror, and inversion of terror into humour, from different vantage points. First one girl, Ruth, related an actual recent experience of witnessing a bigger boy tormenting a smaller one, and her own intervention. Next the group alluded to stories that they are familiar with from the Dr. Bird readers. The group effectively communally sketched the main action of a bully who gets his come-uppance in a game of tug of war. Then the group relinquished the floor to one of the boys in the group, Aaron. He tells a story in fine detail about a boy who in the end gets the best of the bully. In the story, the boy's ability to do this hinges on an out-of-school experience, in which the hero of the story sees the bully in a feminised role, which effectively emasculates the bully, and means he loses his ability to terrorise.

The next two offerings dipped into an even more localised form of knowledge, folk tales. The first is one that has been traded amongst the children, and is similar to urban myths traded amongst European children, about a boy, who failing to purchase meat at the store, convinces a girl to part with a piece of her own flesh. The next story performed has as its source the girl's grandmother. In the story, a girl does not know her mother's name. The mother threatens to kill her if she cannot find it out. On the girls' journey to fetch water, she asks three animals. The first two do not help her, the third, however, does. When the wicked mother learns her name has been revealed, she sets upon the animals in revenge. However, the third animal, gives as good as he gets and the story ends on a triumphal :

And di cow buck im and e licked di cow again
And di cow buck im until e licked di cow again
And di cow BUCK IM!!!

After this performance time, I asked if they will make up a story together. The intent is to use the story in the round activity so valuable in Scottish research. Although

they quite readily evidenced the ability to construct a story communally, doing something as prosaic as to order their contributions based on proximity to the last speaker, instead of performance ability and timing, was so foreign to them as to be inconceivable. Interestingly, the girl who starts the story, starts with the same opening situation as the Dr. Bird reader story. Children have their marbles stolen by a bully. But this time, one solitary hero does not emerge to challenge him. The group as a whole, a chorus as it were, takes him on. This time it is not the bully who is put in a dress and disempowered, it is the chorus that dresses up in "oman's brief" and in something akin to a John Connu⁴ costume and, in so doing, slips into another reality, gains magical potency that enables them to enlist the help of poisonous and dangerous animals to trap the bully. With exultant glee they linger over the entrapment scene voicing it in Patwa:

Hannah: He was tattered and teared up
And the frogs ate him for their supper –giggle

Ruth: Yes little bully
I cyaught you now
You get what you want m(US)⁵an?
You deserve it (giggles)

Mary: Yees! Dem bite off your head off your body
Make dem nyam you and nyam you (lots of giggles)

Aaron: And suddenly
I go to catch some crocodile
And make eat you too (giggles)

After that the frogs
Began to lick their tongues

Esther: Lick em sweet
Like KFC!
Oh my gosh
It's so nice!

The frog said
Aye little boy
Say bye bye to your friends

The story ends by a return to the school environment, at which point a local proverb is invoked: "Because who cyan hear must feel." The terrifying example serves to

⁴ Procession of masqued figures during the Christmas season. The characters and their symbols evolved through colonial and post colonial adaptations of the practice, but its origins are within Ghanain society and male cults (Burton 1997).

⁵ Denotes distinct American shading of the elongated vowel sound.

cow all the other would-be bullies who, unlike what they have only moments before recounted to me as the real situation, are forever cured of bullying. It definitely seemed to me that the carnival work of inverting terror has been at work in this story in several of its elements.

This is not the end of our session together. I have with me a folk tale that I used in research in Scotland and hoped, in this session, to use it to gain cross-cultural data⁶. I retell the folk tale, all but its punch-line, in which a camel must decide how he will repay a jackal who betrayed him. In response they broke into a lively conversation in which they competed to convey, not opposing points of view, but to be the one to state the same point most effectively. Revenge, as they portrayed it, is necessary, but as they narrated from lived experience, quickly drawing on several examples of conflicts with friends, revenge is complicated. There were several interesting points about the form of the rhetoric they use, which I will explore later in the chapter in detail. What I want to emphasise here is the overall impression the group left with me. This is that their interpretation of, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you," had been firmly re-interpreted as its old testament counterpart, essentially, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The authority of this text and their interpretation of it, as it has been mediated through the adults in the community, was soon to be illustrated to me. Both the bully story and their interpretation of revenge foreshadowed events that were to unfold within the week.

CULTURE AS LIVED EXPERIENCE: VIOLENCE AS LIVED EXPERIENCE

The following day was eventful. The "shelter" class were working on a simple paragraph on pets: "People should be kind to animals. They should not be cruel." (Field Journal C: 94). The children struggled to sound out the word cruel, only two managing to lead the rest of the class through it. As the lesson drew to a close, one of the boys interjected that he had heard a dog howl further up the ridge and it gave him a fright. The teacher replied in terse tones that catch my attention "Yes, sometimes it's a warning that someone has died. Dogs are special you know."

⁶ Not unlike Chafe's (1980) pear stories.

As I left the class I overheard the upper stream chant, "the square of 19 is 361. The square of 20 is 400," re-emphasising to me the disparity between the attainment levels of the two groups. Next door the upper stream teacher of grade six was handing exams out, reading out each student's test scores as they rose to collect their papers.

I made my way to the lower stream of grade six to find they had been writing compositions. Mr. Noble had written on the board the beginning sentence of a story and has asked them to complete it:

There was a sudden stillness as the man crept quietly towards the house . . .

Some boys' stories took the part of the house owner, others turned the story into a joke; it wasn't an intruder, just a cat. Jeremiah's version, however, identifies with the man creeping forward and describes his thoughts, "that the people will not wake up or see him and call the police an get him arest an go to jail for ten years."

This is one of the rare pieces of writing, from the many I collected from all ability groups, both boys and girls at this school, that depicted the interior thoughts of a person. It was the only one that focuses exclusively upon them.

The last class I observed for the day was the religious education lesson of the upper stream of grade five, which Mr. Lewis usually holds out-of-doors under the spreading eaves of the guango tree. The topic he explored was "Christ is Our Friend". Mr. Lewis was seated for this lesson and conducted it by calling on children to read and interpret biblical text. As I examine later in this chapter in detail, this lesson departed in form and context from the chalk and talk⁷ of lessons held indoors. In the lesson Mr. Lewis emphasised that Christ was a friend to many different people, not just the rich and deserving.

The final bell of the school day brought the lesson to a close. As I was taking leave of Mr. Lewis, a boy drew our attention to a white van parked on the road that people had gathered around. I turned to Mr. Lewis for explanation, and he

⁷ His lesson bears resemblance to the Rastafari practice of "citing up" explored by Pulis (1995) whereby life experience is the authoritative source from which scripture is interpreted, rather than vice versa, a practice with similarities to liberation theology developed elsewhere in Latin America.

responded, "a boy chopped his grandmother's head off." He added ruefully, "Why they stopped to let people see, I don't know," and shakes his head.

Later that evening I heard the boys talk excitedly about the police vans that went up the ridge. Then on the nightly news, the disconcerted face of the local police superintendent appears. His version of events changes my interpretation of the event. Children and adults, to date, had recounted to me the occasional sudden fits that the mad can take, which includes beheading their close relatives. In fact, some of these stories are told about men who roam freely through the community, subsisting on the unsolicited hand-outs, which, in the absence of any official provision, serve as the local safety net. An attitude of tolerance is conveyed through this local folk practice. However, I learn from the news report that the boy who committed the crime is not related to the old woman he murdered, and that, in fact she is a returnee who was in the process of building a nice house. The boy had escaped from a secure unit, presumably sent there for stealing, possibly from the same elderly woman. The house, providing a wage for the local men building it, represents the several ways retired Jamaicans returning from abroad pour valuable economic and cultural capital into the communities they return to. Though there is an ambiguity, not unrelated to the ambiguity of tourism, associated with their status, they are greatly valued by their communities and often protected, in a way not dis-similar to the way tourists are. That one should be outright murdered is extremely bad news⁸.

The next morning I went down to the school earlier than usual. After the close of devotion, I became aware of a sharp rhythmic slapping noise. I made an attempt to concentrate on the discussion, but the noise grew louder, and I could not help but think what it is. It was a piece of thick leather, hitting with force some part of a child's body, and I had heard at least twenty strokes. A nearby teacher explained that the principal was giving a surprise flogging to all students who were late that day. As I left the building, I caught a glimpse of the principal striding between students, the tight knot of her muscles as she raised her arm above her shoulder and brought it down hard on the outstretched hands. She was not looking at faces; she

⁸ By the late 1980's the murder rate in Jamaica was twice as high as that in the United States, and has continued to rise (Holland and Moser 1997). Although most violent crime is concentrated around urban areas and is integrated into the drug trade which is increasingly being influenced by Colombian connections, there are disturbing changes in patterns of violence which indicate it is becoming more pervasive across Jamaica.

did not look at the students' eyes, just out-stretched hands. But some eyes were watching intently. Several of the lower stream six-grade boys were lined up outside the door of their classroom, witnessing silently. At the time I did not see, but one of them, Daniel, was crying, not, as Mr. Noble tells me later, because he himself was hit, but because he was so angered by what he saw as an act of injustice. I commented to Mr. Noble that this is against Ministry of Education policy. He laughed shrilly and agreed it was not fair, not good, but necessary. "You'll see tomorrow, they'll be on time." I counter, "what is so special about tomorrow that they need to be on time?"

Mr. Noble used my question, I later learn, to begin a discussion with the class about the fairness of the punishment. He related to me later, how surprised he was at their response. They had what he called "a very lively discussion", which I read to mean, for once the Dancehall crew stayed focused and participated. What struck Mr. Noble was that the class had a sense of justice and fairness, and felt this act of punishment strongly violated it. I left the school to make a few phone calls at the nearby police station that had the only land-line in the community. While I am there I learn the boy who committed the murder had turned himself in to the police at a larger town near the coast. The policeman conveyed this news as if it signalled some kind of defeat. When I related it to one of the women at the sweet stall just outside the school gates, she grumbled, "they shouldn't have brought him in live, they should have brought him in dead." A teacher, herself late for school⁹, echoes the same sentiment; if the community had found him, he would have been dead."

I began to wonder if the punishment just enacted on the children of this school was not unrelated to the punishment the community intended for the boy. Why today, of all days, did the principal choose to revert to this form of discipline? It was the first time this term such wholesale punishment had been meted out.

As both myself and the teacher approached the school, it appeared that some form of protest to the beating was being voiced. Was there a connection between the beating, any turbulence it stirred up, and the appearance on the school grounds of one of the local mad man, striding up and down between the halls yelling a mixture of absurdities and obscenities, brandishing a breadfruit branch as if exorcising some

⁹ Transportation and the distances involved being what they are, not to mention the intervention of weather conditions and other acts of nature, make arriving at the school on time no small feat for teachers and students alike.

demon? The principal's role had shifted dramatically from enacting a kind of violence to protecting the school and its occupants from its potential. She was now engaged in the delicate process of gingerly corralling "Zeb" without coming within striking distance herself. Eventually she managed to herd him out the gate.

Later in the day, I approached her with questions about the beating. She responded: "Don't think I hate any children at this school. I love them as if they were my own."

The day that had begun with this ritual beating ended with a PTA meeting, in which the principal reads out from the official Ministry documents sent out to commemorate this, "Parent's Week", a letter from the Governor General. The letter expands on the piece of progressive parenting advice chosen as the week's theme: "Children Learn When Parents Listen". No one seemed to notice the incongruity between this exhortation to "listen when children ask questions and don't think them rude," and the unquestioning dispensation of punishment meted out earlier in the day. One mother sitting nearby sucked her teeth in disdain as a list of progressive parenting tips were read out.

Through the rest of the week, I took opportunities to ask others in the community about their reading of events, conscious that it was a sensitive issue, as it amounted to airing dirty laundry before a stranger. Again and again I heard people adamantly insist that the boy should have been killed. When I asked Mr. Lewis; his response was typically understated: "I'm not saying they should have killed him," then a very soft chuckle, "but if they had caught him, they would have."

The only dissenting voice is that of a Rastafari man whose take on the situation was this. When I told him about the strapping at school, he, in his customary fashion asked me a question, "what did that teach?" I replied, "that violence is the solution." He replied, "Exactly, that's how they are the same. Government does that. Fourteen-year-old kills because of the government. That's why I plant banana, coco yam, okra. I don't depend on government, government depends on me, my government is government of banana, government of coco."

Looking through the seventy pages of notes for the week, much of life went on as usual, practice began for the cultural competition at the end of term, the community development group met to discuss adult education classes. I had several good

conversations with parents and began tutoring some of the lower sixth stream boys for the up-coming G-SAT test¹⁰. Startling in its absence was any further talk amongst the children about the murder. This instance illustrated to me the sharp distinctions drawn between what is and isn't acceptable to say in front of children. The one exception to this silence was one boy's response to the comic strip activity in progress by then. Ezekiel had extreme difficulty sequencing letters in the right order, or even orientating them on the page, but he drew very well, and we often drew together. He drew a sequential depiction of a boy stabbing an old woman, the woman dying and then the boy hanging. Given the fact that many of the children of the community were the ones to feel the only consequences of the crime that could be locally administered, it is ironic that, under the guise of protection, they were prevented from openly coming to terms with the event. What they didn't hear, they did feel.

OPENINGS IN CLASS DISCUSSIONS FOR TRANSITION FROM EXPERIENCE TO REPRESENTATION

The Jamaica readers of this chapter, and I hope there will be some, may perhaps find nothing extraordinary in this account, regrettable perhaps, but not unusual. That seemed to be Mr. Lewis' response. His remarks about the incident framed it within an overall pattern about which he frequently expressed concern. Whenever I asked for his interpretation of my observations, he grounded his response in terms of sociological and economic factors. He prefaced his remarks with factors to take into consideration—not just lack of opportunities for youth, but a change in household structures, younger mothers, coping with less resources. Importantly, he stressed another factor, a change in values as reflected in a change in the predominant organising narrative. He saw this as symbolised in a change in the culture of sports. Athletes used to be seen as representing their country. There was a political significance to their role. Now, athletes are only in it for the salary. Cricket no longer enjoys the status it once had; it has been eclipsed by the American game, basketball. The younger generation no longer set their sights on working hard to get

¹⁰ The G-SAT (Grade Six Achievement Test) is the newest version of selection testing that determines what calibre of secondary school, if any, that the student will be eligible to attend.

an education so they can, perhaps, be a nurse in “foreign,” saving up their money so they can return as pensioners. The preferred destination is no longer Britain; it is the United States. This generation admires the flashy new cars, jeeps and trucks that relatively young men drive upon their return from the States, announcing their successful status often within the drug trade. What they don’t see, Mr. Lewis adds, are all those who fail, end up in jail, or how quickly success can turn to failure. He summarised that people no longer believe in gradual change, they believe in get-rich-quick. As we talked about the importance of narratives to a community, Mr. Lewis commented what people have now are not complete stories, but fragments of stories.

Mr. Lewis belongs to a generation younger than Mr. Noble. His education at UWI at Mona, Kingston, is more recent and reputed to be on more of an international standard than that of teacher training colleges. Unlike other teachers in the school, he did not categorically dismiss Dancehall and the culture that surrounds it. He, in fact, played it in his car, tactfully switching to a middle-of-the-road radio station when ferrying other teachers. He shared with me a paper he wrote on Rastafari culture that he researched as part of course work for his teaching degree. Talking to Mr. Lewis I got the sense that he took in many perspectives but judiciously reserved judgement.

For instance, it was Mr. Lewis who pointed out to me the letter from the Ministry of Education and Culture, stating the Ministry’s withdrawal of support for use of corporal punishment. This discourse, as well as the Rastafari discourse, is one he takes into account and balances against the perceived needs of the community. One of those needs is for parents and teachers to work together. He related a narrative about the divisive effects of the Ministry’s policy. A traditional way of raising children has been discouraged without any viable alternatives being offered in its place. In relation to this, as well as other recent Ministry innovations, Mr. Lewis had this observation:

The more things change, the more they stay the same. They change the test, but we are still teaching to the test rather than building up our students (Field Journal B: 158).

Though he may be critical, Mr. Lewis worked within the constraints and consciously strategised, according to his perception of them. In the staff meeting, when I asked teachers about how they manage the differences between Patwa and English in class, my question quickly became aligned with what teachers perceive as a

misguided argument that advocates the formal teaching of English as if it were a foreign language like Spanish¹¹. Mr. Lewis' response was to point out, "They don't set exams in Creole."

In the term I observed, Mr. Lewis pushed his class through the content of all the subjects at a demanding pace that caught other teachers by surprise when they were asked to fill in for him during his absence. All four boards are regularly covered with assignments¹². Students in his class often worked into break, lunch and after school to finish copying or completing assignments. Yet, his delivery of this content subtly signalled a stance between the cultures of SJE and Patwa that was inclusive of both.

Often enough his affirmative response to a student's correct answer was an unapologetic, "Yah man", not "Yes, that is correct". The overall rhythm of his voice was not the clipped but staid, four-beat-march of the imperial project that the majority of teachers emulated. When I interviewed him after the staff meeting, Mr. Lewis talked about how he informally included Patwa in the class and why:

B: What place do you think it should have,
is it chattin bad? or somehow inferior?

Mr. Lewis: I don't think so
because—
it's a part of us
you know
and it will always remain
so, I guess
we have to do what we can to
move from on level to the other
because sometimes even the politicians too
when they are trying to reach their people
they even/
they have to switch from one to the other
you know?
so I guess it's the same way in the classroom
you,
you try, as best as you can, to explain things to them

¹¹ One would have to experience the usual delivery of Spanish lessons to appreciate fully the folly of suggesting English would be better taught in this fashion.

¹² This is an indication of the length of assignment for "seat work" (Evans 2001) that he sets in contrast to the one board of large printed exercises the lower stream children are set. Evans (2001) uses this term to describe the common practice of having children copy from the board and complete assignments at their seats, which they then bring to the teacher to check. Evans raises concerns about the actual amount of teaching or learning that takes place in this kind of activity.

if they can't understand it in English you
 you do it in the style that they know
 and can understand.
 So I don't see anything wrong
 with going from one level to the other
 you go here and 'ere
 you know
 use what children know
 to get from one point to the other
 And I think it 'elps
 when sometimes you talk to them/
 and I find that

most of my students
 even though they talk
 the Patwa
 when it comes to writing
 they translate well in/
 but one or two
 they can't
 they cant get the translation right
 in **some** cases,
 you know?
 for example
 they will say "dat"
 and when they write it out
 you will see its d-a-t
 um,
 but
 You will get there after awhile,
 but I think you need to start
 with what they know
 from the known to the unknown.
 That's what you have to do.
 (Tape Q)

The way in which Mr. Lewis moved between levels and made sense of the creole condition resembled Braithwaite's depiction of the creole process, as "a model which allows for blood flow, fluctuations, the half-look, the look both/several ways" (1994: 7). Mr. Lewis used religious education lessons as a site for opening out questions, encouraging critical thinking, contextualising formal knowledge by affirming and acknowledging local knowledge and sources of wisdom. In using religious education lessons in this way, Mr. Lewis drew on a legacy of religious education as a site of empowerment, even subversion, as noted by many scholars such as Carrington (1999), Littlewood (1995)¹³ and Chevannes:

¹³ Cultural resistance and reassertion for African Americans has always been closely associated with religion. It provides an alternative system of meaning for the

The most central institution to the tradition of resistance in Jamaica has been religion. Whether resistance through the use of force, or resistance through symbolic forms such as language, folk-tales and proverbs, or resistance through the creation of alternative institutions, religion was the main driving force among the Jamaican peasants. (1995: 1)

His use of religious education encouraged his own students' critical thinking. Lessons engaged students, sustained interest and sparked excitement, in part because, in subtle but powerful ways, he signalled their home culture and identity could be included in class discourse.

I first became aware of Mr. Lewis' teaching style because of its effect on the children in his class. It was their eager recounting of a lesson, performed with considerable excitement and pride that led me to look more closely at his teaching practice.

On the first meeting with a group from his class, when I asked for their news or their stories, they were eager to tell me in vivid detail about their class discussion earlier in the day. Their re-telling took a communal form. Not content to let one speaker give a mono-logical account, they broke into the pauses in speech to contextualise the importance of what was being recounted. They recounted the wisdom tests of Solomon, the identical set of six girls and boys, the real flowers amongst the artificial ones. The retelling culminated in this important revelation: They can claim a link with Solomon, because she who put him to these tests, the Queen of Sheba, had a child with him, whom she raised in Ethiopia, that is Africa. Throughout the discourse, voices farther away from the tape recorder insistently interjected, "Menelik! Menelik!" and the story ends with all the children chorusing the name, as one child explains, he is Rastafari.

Ruth: Queen of Sheba miss?

Uh miss

Sir told that uh

She

And King Solomon

Had a child

books

B: Sir told you that?

Hannah: The child's name was Menelik

Esther: in one of our books?

child and in one of our

: Menelik

chorus: Menelik, Menelik

dominated, presumably because religion is usually less accessible to external control than other collective behaviours (it was the only form of aggregation permitted during West Indian slavery) . . . it can provide the model for an alternative social dispensation at an appropriate time, keeping intact in the meanwhile shared patterns of meaning which remain in opposition to (or are at least radical reinterpretations of) those of the dominant group. (Littlewood: 1995: 245-246)

Ruth: And he come from the Rastafarian,
 Sir//
 books
 Esther:Miss! Miss!
 B: And your teacher told you that?
 Ruth and a few others: Yeh

Esther: (louder than Ruth): In one of our

As Ruth recounted this information, Esther confirmed its veracity by reference to what is the ultimate authority, their grammar handbook. The crowning evidence is that even their British textbook had had to acknowledge it as true. After all, there in its pages, amongst the list of other phrases they must memorise if they are to emulate fluent Standard English Usage, is the saying, "As Wise as Solomon". The convergence of three sources validating the African part of their heritage, Bible, teacher, and grammar book, was a rare occasion, almost unprecedented. However, this was not the only point they wished to make. The affirmation of local wisdom within this interaction went even deeper. As well as "Menelik!" the phrase that continued to break into the conversation was, "he never ask for money!" They each strove to claim it as proof and vindication, not only of Solomon, but of themselves as well, and the lay preachers who propounded the value of wisdom over money from the many pulpits of this community that have no full-time ordained ministers.

Ruth: When you ask for wisdom miss?
 Everything comes in it
 Comes in it (slows enunciates more clearly)
 When you ask for money alone miss
 Nothing don't
 It's not everything come in
 And if you ask for wisdom?
 You get salVAtion above that /but you
 Money can't buy salvation miss

Hannah: Miss

While one could pause to ponder the cultural hybridity of this affirmation, the point that seems significant to me, is the extent to which the children actually had made meaning from a classroom discussion, retained that meaning and continued to fashion their own out of it. The process of self-affirmation within these children's re-interpretations of texts was similar to the possibility of re-interpretation that Erna Brodber holds out at the end of her novel *Myal* (1988), in which a young woman, recovering from her own period of zombification, learns to re-assess the school texts in such a way as to resist the zombification they would instil in her students. The question her mentor leaves her with is this one: "(the author) wrote, you think without an awareness of certain things. But does he force you to teach without this awareness? Need your voice say what his says?" (1988: 107).

Turning from the students' report of a class discussion, to direct observation of a class discussion, Mr. Lewis' concern with voice and interpretation becomes evident:

FORMAL LESSONS, INFORMAL LOGIC

Mr. Lewis: "What does Emmanuel mean?"

A response comes from the long line of children arranged along the large emerged root of the guango tree: "Mighty Councillor!"

Another response: "Saviour"

The class is beginning to play the association game, whereby anything in the related discourse is called out, but Mr. Lewis cuts in:

"I'm askin' do **you** know, hands up"

He pauses to look at a few hesitant hands. "This is what your going to do . . ." Instructions follow to spend some time at home going over Bible passages and figuring out what they mean. He has a Bible open on his knee, and, as I look around, I notice so do most of the boys, in contrast to the claim that was made at a PTA meeting. Mr. Lewis asks someone to read Isaiah 9: 6-7. Those without Bibles move their lips along to the familiar words. As they finish reading out Mr. Lewis takes up his point: "All right, you're going to find out what all those names mean, and discuss what kind of person this man was, his nature or his character."

A boy breaks in, reverting to the strategy initially attempted: "A stem of Jesse!"

Mr. Lewis moves the class on without comment. He instructs the girls to read another passage from the prophets about "the spirit of wisdom and might, the spirit of knowledge. . . ." They read with the regular heavy emphasis on each syllable regardless of meaning or connection between words that is the standard "reading voice" children use for all SJE texts.

When they finish Mr. Lewis asks again, "do we understand anything about his character from what we read?"

There is a silence; then one girl repeats from the text just read. Again Mr. Lewis greets this attempt to imitate without explaining with silence.

Then another girl offers, "He is strong"

Mr. Lewis responds, "In a sense."

This marks the departure point out of the standard strict mimetic discourse most prevalent in all their other lessons. The third time he asks them what they think, they actually begin to articulate thinking. A boy speaks up. I do not hear his offering, but Mr. Lewis' response accentuates the process at work. It signals strongly to the class that a discourse beyond that which is usually

carried out in SJE is welcome. Mr. Lewis responds in Patwa: "Yah, man, Samson says he separates wicked from good."

Another boy speaks up relating this verse to judgement day and the New Testament parable of sheep and goats.

At this point I record Mr. Lewis' use of indirect, but quite cutting humour, "She turn her back; she have her own class. She don't want to talk to me," to criticise a member of the class whose attention has strayed.

Meanwhile, other girls are competing for his attention. They offer a song that expresses "Jesus is a friend". Mr. Lewis accepts this exploration of the theme, welcoming into the discourse both another theme and another medium for exploring the theme. A rich mosaic of associations is building up. While the girls sing, the boys beat a steady rhythm on their Bibles. As the song concludes with "Amen", Mr. Lewis pushes the critical thinking possibilities of the topic further:

"How do you know that Jesus was born on Christmas?"

The girls' reaction is confusion.

Mr. Lewis continues, suggesting in a hypothetical narrative how they might think about this topic, "Have you ever posed the question at Sunday School?"

He looks to see their reaction,

"So why you don't do that?"

He explains in narrative form what this process of inquiry might mean:

"You go to Adventists, maybe Adventists have one view, maybe Leah's church have another view. I'm not claiming to be an authority. I have my views, which may be different from others. So, Nicholas, you're going to ask whosoever is knowledgeable when he was born. We want some feedback next Monday."

Someone pipes up: "Sir, we can't."

Another person claims: "Sir, mi naw go to church."

But this is countered: "He go to church."

Meanwhile, Mr. Lewis continues building a possible narrative that the students' exploration can join: "Some say he was born in September cause it took that long for the wise men to get there. Don't ask lickle people ask the elders"

Leah: "Sir, you ask them if he was born at Christmas, they say yes, you must ask them how they know?"

Mr. Lewis: "There's one school of thought. Some believe he wasn't born while shepherds watched their flocks by night. Shepherds couldn't be out in field in winter. Some that they could have a fire."

A discussion about time and different ways of measuring it begins to surface. One girl reports to Mr. Lewis that, "Sir, Nicholas, say the months start at April." That different points of the globe might have different ways of orienting their measurement of time to suit the agricultural seasons pulls powerfully away from the reinforcement of the imperial centre that the language texts present.

Mr. Lewis: "If I'm tellin you it might be like a ---so ask your church."

Ruth is saying to her neighbour in a quiet voice, "If you watch the news they are fighting over Jerusalem and Palestine, both claim it as their capitol. They're at war over that little piece of land." A boy breaks in, "It's Israel's!"

Ruth: "you chat too much, you listen!"

This side conversation is overlayed by Mr. Lewis' continued encouragement, which I record imperfectly as, "We've talked about this, you can learn everything . . ."

Another girl raises her hand, still unsure of the permissible boundaries that Mr. Lewis is suggesting, "Sir, suppose Nicholas came with a different answer to Sarah?"

Mr. Lewis: "That's what we want, so we can draw our own conclusions."

I record another nearby girl a little more confident in switching to this different discourse style, Esther: "Yes, you see!"

Mr. Lewis continues explaining: "When you grow up and go to high school or if you go to university, you can't go to one book; you have to look at four or five books."

Class is nearly over. To those who have failed to engage, he passes the following commentary: "I wonder why people come at all if they know everything already, why bother to come, one class here and there." A girl from the younger class rushes by, running away from one of the local mad men who follows muttering.

Mr. Lewis: "By their fruits you shall know them." (Field Journal D: 21-25)

As class breaks up Ruth, who had raised the issue of current tension between Israel and Palestine, stayed behind with Mary to explain the situation there to me, which she bases on her knowledge of the Bible. God gave the land to Israel so they should be allowed to keep it. The Palestinians are equated with the Philistines.

Ruth and Mary used the Bible as a reliable source for interpreting the world beyond their community. Mr. Lewis used it to affirm local wisdom, to make a bridge between community and school learning and to recast both as cites of critical, reflective thinking, instead of question-less submission.

This session shared many characteristics with other religious education sessions I witnessed. Mr. Lewis' use of Patwa; his tolerance of a wider range of responses; an associative or holistic approach to exploring a topic; and his means of disciplining not through an appeal to authority structures or physical punishment but through an appeal to communal awareness, a means of coercion more at home over a game of dominoes or up on the wall, are all characteristic of the class he conducts physically outside the school structure as well as in many respects outside the dominant curriculum structure.

SHAPING STORIES: HOW CHILDREN MOVE BETWEEN STORY AND SCHEMATIC FORMS

In the sessions I had with children from Mr. Lewis' class, the children drew on many of these same elements and extended their use. They followed Mr. Lewis' advice, to consult more than one book. In this case, it is stories that they consult, contrast and compare. They showed a greater use of critical thinking, coupled with a flexibility in moving between forms not evidenced in the many conversations I had with lower stream boys.

For instance, let us re-examine the discussion on bullying and the many different ways stories were used within the discussion. Stories were used to explain, to perform, to compare experience, and finally to examine an ethical dilemma from several different vantage points. This could be seen as a prime example of the "embedded philosophy" that Henry (2000) claims is characteristic of Caribbean culture.

In doing so, the children quickly made the connection between the moral to which the story was leading and an often quoted Bible verse, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". However, they interpreted this quote as meaning, "do unto others as they have done to you". One could interpret this as a mere grammatical misunderstanding of a complex verb construction. However, the ensuing discussion revealed that their interpretation of the quote is buttressed by a quite considered assessment of the many different ways repaying good for evil and vice versa might work out in the grounds surrounding Caledonia Heights Primary:

Hannah: Miss and they 'ave a saying

Do unto others as you would ave them do ?:as you would have them do
Yes
What goes around comes around.

B: But if the camel
Wants the jackal to do unto him
He wouldn't roll over would he? Leah --- Nyoooo
Esther: Miss it don't mean like that
Let me talk everybody
It means like if
Mary box me
And ifa me Box er back
Cause she don't ave a right to put her 'and upon mi face.

Ruth: If she don't have a right
Why did she box

Mary: Like the Bible,
It's a proverb or a Bible verse Ruth: or a saying
Mary: Bible verse
Say do unto others
As you would have them do unto you.

The story that follows says much about the local context in which children make sense of this proverb. There are powerful contrary forces that must be balanced. The following story by Ruth indicates how difficult it is to "'ave faith":

Aaron: It's true!
Ruth: And I was telling you last week? Aaron: True!
That even the lickle Aaron: tr--
insect outside
can tell you miss Aaron:she taalk too much
and when I talk they tell me
you chat too bad
because they ave sometimes
dem ave to act fierce
sometimes—
--
get up—
sometimes mi ave to ave faith
and leave it all
'membra if you go back
mi get a harder lick and so
--
dem fight
and pull em in the water
and I was saying
to my m--
Dinah better naw go back in dere and fight
yuh no him in go to de principal

so me n'den¹⁴ tell er
 but mi say
 cause dem go call me chatter box
 me naw baader¹⁵
 better you no
 make Dinah go and and go fight
 and me say, you see when
 yesterday when sir
 did not say
 part the fight miss?
 Dinah was
 Dinah's face was
 bruise
 bruise er up er face
 bruise up and
 her face
 and Chloe was coming to hit her back on the same place
 Hannah: Miss her father came up here this mornin
 Leah: Miss, and when dey went
 When Dinah was doing her work miss?
 She say to Chloe
 she must wait miss
 because she wanted to fight er back
 She told her to wait
 And she say miss
 And she did not finish her work miss --She love fight in the class
 you see
 And when I told Dinah
 She must go to er 'ome, miss
 Elizabeth and Judith was tellin me
 That I talk too much
 Nobody's going to claw them
 And get away (Tape N)

Aaron: Bruise
 Aaron: Bruise miss
 Samson: bruised around
 Ruth: Same way
 Naaaaa
 Yes!
 Yesterday

 Yes miss

Apparently whatever "avin faith" is, Dinah does not have enough to walk away, though she got the worst of the last fight, and is likely to get the worst of the next, even though the school authorities and parents have intervened. All these forms of authority are not enough to counter-balance the imperative, the necessity, of being seen to, "do unto others as they have done to you." She cannot let someone "claw her" and get away with it.

The conversation through stories then turns to recounting several instances when the balance of the equation implied within the proverb is broken, when a good you do another is not returned. Several different instances from the informal economy

¹⁴ intend to

¹⁵ bother, as in go to the trouble to tell them

within the classroom are drawn upon, lunch money or lunch being a primary example. After considering people's tendency to renege on promises, Ruth applies "avin faith" to the camel's predicament in the folk tale I have half told:

Ruth: I would say he must have faith miss
And carry him back over miss
Like who you--

Esther: Miss! Miss!

Esther: Miss one day miss
Miss one day miss
Rebecca beg Rachel something miss
I don't know what miss but she beg
Rebecca beg her something miss
And she say she is not giving her any miss
And I say

--miss

Rebecca,
Some day is gonna come when Rachel beg you something
Rachel says she is not going to beg Rebecca anything miss
And the same day after that miss
Rebecca had something and Rachel beg her miss
Bu-

Mary: I wan,

And then I say
Rachel, you remember what you say
Your not going to beg Rebecca no
And then she laugh miss!
class (Tape N)

B: Ahhhhh!

Ruth: And then-- Hannah: True—in our

Through this excerpt it appears that what one has to "ave faith" in is not actually God. Faith seems to be something more like trust, trust that a person will keep their word, or that they will remember they all depend upon each other. The next scenario related is very similar to this, however, it ends with the teller getting her own back by being generous. After reminding the girl who had refused to share that she had said that she would never ask for anything again, the person demonstrates her superiority by sharing even with this person who could not be trusted to keep the contract--almost as if to drive the point home.

Stories about giving licks back as good as one gets and sharing lunch leap frog over one another. It is as if a balancing act is going on. Each story contributes a weight to one or the other side of the balance. All of them hinge upon relating pithy exchanges of reported speech. The stories grow more personal. First, they are about members of the class who are not in the room, but then the names of those present begin to be

cited¹⁶. This cycle is brought to a close when the girl who began the story cycle, Ruth, actually brings me, in a hypothetical sense, into the scenario. She has returned to examine what “aving faith” means in the face of a bully. As the 6B boys did in trying to get me to understand a point, she moves from recounting with words to demonstrating by physically involving me. She suggests I play the role of the bully and she the victim to try to convince me of the power imbalance. Her point is that if she doesn’t ‘ave faith and take the licks she gets “easy” and go on, she will get more licks. The group choruses “more licks” drawing it out. In the face of this depiction, the teller then makes a point to the contrary:

Ruth: Miss, sometime
 sometime miss me ave to go back to dem miss--
 see miss
 im bad
 Love stick
 Love stick, you see Miss (snaps finger)
 Love fight bwoy

Aaron: im bad you

Hannah: You have to go fight miss.

It seems to me that this last encounter is the one that requires the most faith or belief in one’s luck, to survive this David and Goliath encounter. In an odd way the weight of the entire preceding passage somehow seems to be turned quite deftly so that it supports rather than contradicts her final assertion. It is as if all the considerations that have gone before can be balanced against this need to stand up for one’s self. It also leads me to wonder if this narrative is replicated on different levels of society. Just as the children see themselves as having often to stand up to older more powerful children in against-the-odds encounters, do they also imagine that their community of small and poorly resourced coffee and cocoa growers, nevertheless, has to stand up to international markets?¹⁷

In this excerpt both the boys and girls of the class show that they are adept at moving between topic centred stories and an overall topic associative discourse format and that they are able to reason fluently through stories. Their discussion

¹⁶ In an article which notes that the connections between argumentation and narrative are relatively unexplored in discourse studies, Carranza draws on fieldwork to demonstrate the important role reported speech plays in narrative forms of argument.

¹⁷ Attempts by the Jamaican Farmer’s Union to restart a local chapter meant conversations in which these very scenarios and metaphors were cited circulated around the community at this time.

was a quick, intense series of tightly structured topic centred stories. The moral assertions as well as rationale for why one story was being contrasted or compared with another was left largely unspoken. Like the children in the Scottish classroom, the strongest topic centred narratives arise as a form of argumentation to illustrate a point. To analyse the movement of the discussion below I condense the stories into the implied assertions in order to reveal the logical contrasts of their application of the quote to their everyday lived experience. To summarise these are the various points of argument made in the succession of stories:

I INTERPRETATION OF QUOTE:

First version: Do unto others as they did to you

LOGICAL INVERSIONS:

Second version: :They will do bad to each other, even if you tell them not to.

Third version: Even if they don't do good to you, they will still expect you to do good.

Fourth version: Just because you do good doesn't mean they will do it back.

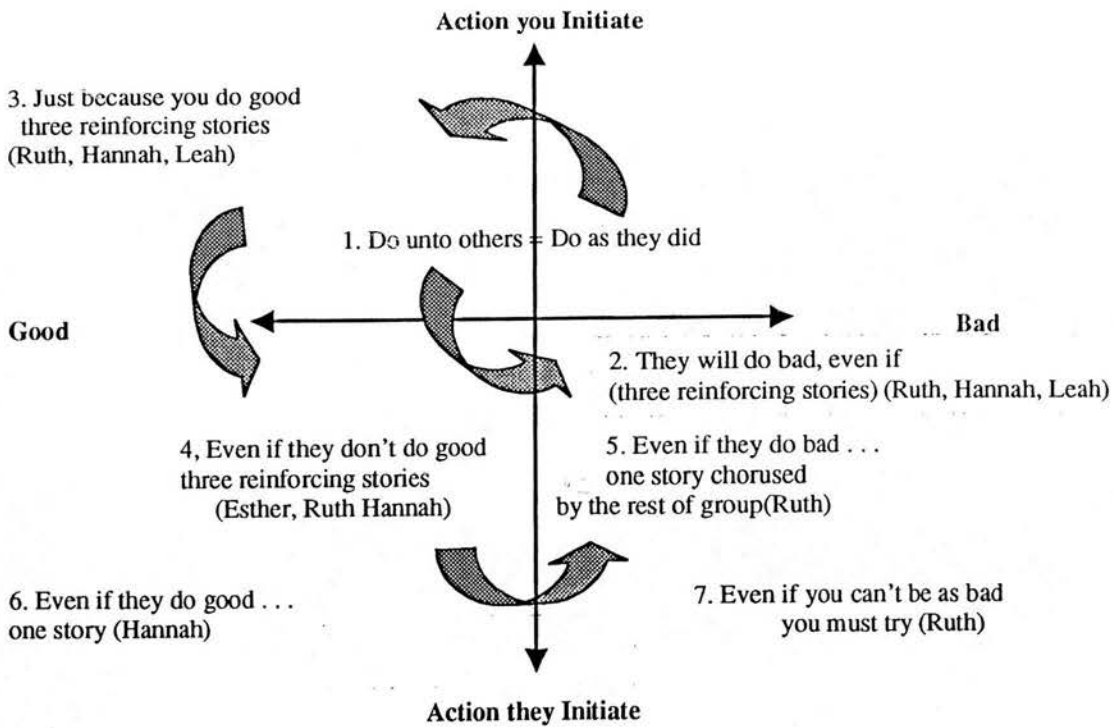
Fifth version: Even if they do bad to you, sometimes you have to not do bad back, but . .

Sixth version: Sometimes even if they do good, they will take it back.

Seventh version: Even if there is no chance of you being able to do bad back to the extent it has been done to you, you still have to be seen to try.

Whilst each story itself was topic centred, consisting of causally sequential phrases and the fundamental elements of narrative construction, the discussion as a whole creates a topic associative pattern. The diagram below charts the flow of the discussion.

Figure 7.1 Topic centred stories in an overall topic associative discussion: Pattern of story clusters circling around theme.



What I am trying to show by this diagram is that whilst each story itself was topic centred, the discussion as a whole creates a topic associative pattern, spreading out around the issue, viewing it from different perspectives rather than following one scenario or position. Encouraging as it was to see this oral critical engagement, this has to be contrasted to class observations which indicated that the critical thinking they did orally, did not seem to transfer to a critical engagement with printed texts. Within limits this group did show greater flexibility in moving between forms of representation and in using representation than the sixth grade boys from the lower stream did.

An example of their flexibility was evidenced in their engagement with the comic strip activity. When I introduced the activity, they were eager to turn their comic strips into storybooks with covers. By their decision we spent longer on this kind of activity than the 6B boys did. They readily separated their story line into boxes. None of them presented a picture with multiple actions going on overlaid on top of each other as the 6B boys had. In fact, words rather than pictures came more easily for the girls. They wanted to include pictures but expressed a lack of confidence in how to draw. When they decided on a form for the cat or elephant to take, often as the result of a scaffolded interaction with myself, this shape became increasingly stylised in their revision, becoming more of a symbol than a picture.

Figure 7.2 Example of story board activity with 5A girls

(Side One)The story will be about a cat.	The cat lives in Jamaica.	The cat meets a dog.	They started Barking at each others.
They Start Fighting	A lion come and chase away the dog. The lion help the cat because he loves her very much.	The cat was happy that the lion chase away the dog for her.	The dog walk slowly and sadly away from the yard.
One day van was passing and the person in the van did not see the cat and the car was running fast and hit the cat. by the time the cat reached the hospital she was dead.	The next day the lion went to see her friend and she saw a hole and dug it up when he look in has hands he saw the cat. The cat was dead. The lion started crying and he was sad.	So, the lion went home and saw a elephant. The elephant asked him why crying. My little friend is dead. Oh, no problem I can be your friend said the elephant. OH yes will you be my friend? Of course not.	The lion asked the elephant if he could marry her
(Side Two) YES said the lion I will marry you	so they got married and live happily together and no one could come and break them apart.		

(the size and writing of original is not reproducible.)

DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF REPRESENTING REALITY: WHAT USE IS A PICTURE?

A third exercise that greatly aided the task of comparing children's differing interpretations and understanding of the uses of texts and pictures between lower and upper streams, was actually initiated by one of the teachers of the primary 4B class. Her class had responded well to it, and she shared it with both the 6B and 4A teachers. At this point I learned of the activity and asked the 4A and 5A classes to also take part so that I could compare the responses across streams in all three grades. Of the several writing exercises that the 6B teacher had set his class, their response to this exercise was one of the most sustained in terms of sheer volume of words. Although the teacher always prefaced exercises with some appeal to the children's imagination and surrounding context, this exercise seemed to appeal to them more than others had. The exercise was entitled "A Market Day" and featured a line drawing of a typical Jamaican market with several vendors in the act of selling or weighing their goods while customers came and went. This picture took up the top left quarter of the page. Lines for writing were provided down the right side and across the bottom half of the page.

In contrast, the higher stream students more often used a different approach that indicated a different understanding of the relation between the picture and the text, namely, they interpreted it as an illustration, and positioned their text in relation to it as such. They, so to speak, put the picture in motion and carried forward the activity of one or a few of the characters forward in time. In order to do so they narrowed the scope of what they described.

Sample Topic-associative style

A Day at the Market

A man is selling another man fish and one lady is selling another lady yam but she is weighing it in the scale first and she sell tomatoes and melon on a mat and a lady have a basket of mangoes and a donkey is walking with pad on his back one of the lady have a bag in her hand the lady who is weighing the ham on the scale sit on a bench and a man who is selling fish sit on a bench too and he have a box in front of him with the fishes in it the man who is buying the fishes he have a bag and a house is right beside them and the lady who is selling the fish have on a cloth around her head and two man have on a hat three lady have on dress and two man have on shirt and pants (spelling corrected)

Sample with Topic-centred elements:

There was a market woman who was poor but people still buy fruit from her. Some people who sell in the market sell on donkey but people still buy from them. The man was tunek that the people was buy from them but they still buy from the market. There was a woman name Pam she was selling yam and banana and more fruit, but there were more people in the market but there were people come and buy food from them. The was a man who was selling fish and the were some people who were just come to market some when to yam and fish and banana Then woman way The thing and Then she give the to the woman and then the woman go home and cook her food and then she give the children. (spelling corrected)

The chart below shows the distribution of range of story structures that children chose. The 4B and 6B classes have more in common with each other, though two school years separate them, than they have in common with either A stream class.

DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN'S SEQUENCING CHOICES

←————→

Topic associative Topic Sequencing

The majority of both 4A and 5A include some topic centred elements, the 5A class slightly more than the 4A. Why do the different streams respond so differently to the task? Certainly the medium of writing constrains the choice they may have felt they had. Why children make the choices of representation that they do, as was indicated earlier, is the result of complex discourse interactions. The reason some of the children are in the lower stream may be because these metalinguistical practices of literacy, such as how illustrations work in relation to surrounding text, are unfamiliar to them. The topic associative style may make more sense to children given the provisional tenuous nature of coping strategies that are familiar to them. The curriculum itself and its delivery may suggest to them that topic associative structures are, in fact, what is expected of them, though I think that is not the intent.

Children hear stories from parents, from teachers, and from their peers. They know what constitutes a story. We confuse them when we ask them to write a story when what we expect is a description of something or somebody. Write a story about your dog. Write a story about your family . . . The lack of distinction between story and description plagues them all the way to CXC

where the distinction is crucial and might cost them several marks. There are numerous classroom opportunities for clearing up this particular confusion but we hardly use them. (1993: 62)

Pollard seems to be making a contrast between narrative texts and paradigmatic texts. An example of a paradigmatic text would be an encyclopaedia entry. What is interesting to note is that the lower stream narratives seem closer to an encyclopaedia entry, though with poorer grammatical skills. How aware are they of the elements and purposes of expository text? They have several examples of it in their science textbooks. The only drawing in school time that I ever saw them do was to render faithfully illustrations of a scientific nature, such as anatomical parts of the eye and ear (Grade 6), or maps of Jamaica (Grade 4) or the Caribbean (Grade 5). It is as if they are doing with words the same task as they do when they draw, getting down every detail, but, just as it would not matter much what detail one began to draw of the eye first, so long as one got them all in eventually, so in the text the details seem to be chosen in order of what catches their eye in the illustration, not based on what overall importance it might have to a definition of market day.

Some higher stream children also took the encyclopaedia entry approach, their texts hanging together better, their perusal of the moment frozen in time seeming more systematic. However, many more upper stream children adopted the narrative form. Why might this be? Does it say something about their familiarity or depth of engagement with varieties of printed text? The children's responses to the activity raise interesting questions, more than they provide answers. However, it does seem to corroborate Pollard's assertion that more clarity is needed, a clarity that can better be gained by engaging students further about what texts are for, rather than inculcating in them unquestioning acceptance of their importance.

UNDERLYING STRATEGIES THAT SEPARATE FORM FROM STORIES

The need for this kind of dialogue about the purpose of texts, and the differing uses of different kinds of texts, is underscored by further class observations. One afternoon, when the 5A class was busy with seat work, I took the opportunity to look at language exercises that the two girls, whose bench I was sharing, had just completed. The vocabulary range was far in advance of anything the lower stream of the sixth grade class would be able to decipher. Yet, there was not much evidence

to show there was any greater degree of critical engagement with the text.¹⁸ The reading assignment consisted of answering questions based on a short passage that they have copied out from one of the many language books. The text they have copied out reads as follows:

The tinned apricots were a great treat, but it was necessary first to thaw them out of their frozen state over our roaring stove. In spite of the great height, our breathing was normal until a sudden exertion would cause us to pant a little. from Ascent of Everest.

Below the text they had copied out the questions and their answers. The first girl's response was as follows.

Question 3: For what did they use the stove?
Answer: They use the stove for a roaring state.

Question 5: Why was it cold?
Answer: It was so cold because they went back into a frozen state.

Question 7: What were the men doing to be at such a great height?
Answer: They were breathing to be at such a great height.

The strategy here seemed to be to copy closely from the text an excerpt that has the same phrases in it as the question, or that seemed similar to the question. This is not that different from the strategy the 6B boys deployed in their geography lesson¹⁹. Her bench mate followed a similar strategy. Here, I report only her answers for brevity's sake:

Answer to Question 3: The honey and jam were frozen so they use the stove to warm it up
Answer to Question 5: because it was frozen
Answer to Question 7: Because in spite of the great height their breathing was almost normal. (Journal B: 154-55)

¹⁸ When I ask girls about their interpretation of gems such as the proverb they do not betray much further critical engagement with the text than they boys did. Typical of the responses are these I recorded one day "the better part of valour is discretion". I get these two responses: "It means education is the best part of life" and, "that we must have better education" (Field Journal: 156).

¹⁹ In light of Jackson's (2002) work on self worth theory that suggests avoidance of the appearance of failure motivates students' strategies, these responses could be interpreted as following a low risk strategy guaranteed to get them at least partial credit rather than attempting the riskier strategy of independent thought.

This strategy gave the appearance of actual comprehension of the question, until Question 7, which can only be answered by interpreting the text and making inferences based on the clue given in the title at the end of the passage. One would also need the crucial bit of contextual information, that Everest is actually a mountain. Milner (1995) found that children's responses to the comprehension tests that she developed often indicated this same strategy of copying without trying to contextualise or in any way think beyond the text.

When I asked about the strategy they employed to do the assignment, one of the girls dutifully described to me that, "I answered that way because we have to look in the text and that was the only place that had those words," (Journal B: 156). Even if this defies logic, the sense is that one must conform to the rules of this exercise.

In exploring their strategies further, I asked how they have come to know that this is what they are supposed to do. They give me this overview of what schooling is about: "Miss D. taught us a lot of things, but when we go on to the next grade we have different things so we don't remember it (what she taught)." They then added, "We build up higher and higher, so we learn new things instead of the old things." This interpretation of the metaphor of building, which is often alluded to at devotion and in "gems", does not seem to require integration, rather it seems to be a stacking activity. When I asked the children of this class which metaphor for education they recognised as suiting their school, the one most often cited was that of ladder. The sense that one leaves behind what one learns before instead of integrating it fits this metaphor.

I then tried to explore the difference with them between interpretation and imitation. These words are foreign to them, so we look them up in their dictionary. The definitions do not make it clear that interpreting is a higher order thinking skill, in fact the same synonyms are listed under both definitions. In exploring different words we light upon copying, which, they say, is very important. We begin to consider if "explaining" might be a term they understand better than "interpret". This, however, is resisted, not, as the sixth grade boys resisted by pulling away into a burst of activity of their own desiring, but by distracting me from the topic by complimenting me. My query would have ended there, but our lesson was interrupted by two boys from the 5A class who burst in chasing each other. Briefly one of them listened in on our conversation, then quite easily interjected with what

he saw the difference between the two terms being. Joshua explained that copying was easier than explaining (Field Journal B: 157). As he described it, sometimes he thinks when he copies, leaving the implication that sometimes he doesn't hang in the air until I offer that sometimes he just repeats without thinking. Then he grins big with a mischievous look and laughs. There was a sense of pleasurable transgression in the air, about speaking about the hidden. He was laughing but unsure just how many tricks of the trade, so to speak, he should pass on to this stranger whose role was ambiguous.

Joshua went on to say that when he explains sometimes he can find words and sometimes he can't, that he has to think, which requires interpreting. In passing he has taken in what several minutes of careful scaffolded conversation had failed to establish with the girls. Yet, Mr. Lewis would characterise Joshua as one of the poorer students who does not pay close attention to his work and does not always finish assignments. From this interaction I would venture to guess it was because he had different priorities from the girls and was less convinced that conforming for form's sake was a virtue.

Later on in the class, I observed that Joshua actually waited for girls in his class to look up and copy from the grammar book the answers, before he began copying from them. When I told him I noticed this, I got the same grin, as if he knew it was cheating but didn't see any reason for changing his tactics. And why should he? He was doing essentially the same task, that of copying, just more efficiently by cutting out the middle step of flipping through the book to find the page. This is exactly the kind of ergonomic strategising, or innovative thinking that 21st century employers would like the education system to inculcate, though, perhaps not applied in quite this way.

This specific instance illustrated a trend that I saw throughout activities I observed in class or in small group activities. The girls conveyed a faith in forms themselves, in their eventual value to a much greater degree than the boys, who, although they also indicated an awareness of the importance of forms, seemed much more ambivalent in their stance towards their importance.

FORM AND VIOLENCE: A GENDER DIVIDE?

How do the differences there seem to be between how girls and boys understand and respond to school tasks correlate with the differences observed in their responses to violence?

Looking over all my field notes and tapes of children's discussion, not once are bullies referred to as "she ". Yet, this is not because girls never raised their fists.

A few days after the morning beating described at the beginning of this chapter, I found the girls from a lower grade at the school engaged in a game I often found them playing, sometimes called "Mammy Lashy", other times referred to as "playing school". Often almost an entire class of girls would be playing this game. Very rarely did boys participate. The game consisted of almost all the girls lining up in a class row, sometimes using a tree root as their "bench". A big girl would stand in front of them and issue some command in a bossy gruff voice. It might have been to spell a word or add a sum or perform some action. The child was given a few seconds to respond. Often she was laughing so hard it was hard to hear what she was saying, her body contracted into itself, her face wound up in a tight knot. Regardless, usually, of what her response was, the taller or bigger girl moved in, took the girl's hand and began smacking it with the belt she had pulled out from her own uniform. The "student's" shrieks of laughter usually intensified as she was beaten, and triggered similar howls from the rest of the "class". After a few quick smacks, the "teacher" would move on to the next victim/student.

I saw this game played several times, always by girls in the middle grades 2-4. Occasionally some grade 5 girls played, however, they also played a more sophisticated game of school.²⁰ Often I sat in the midst of this play class, but was not singled out for punishment until on one occasion I asked why they play this game, "doesn't it hurt?" Amongst laughter they replied, "No! Miss". I insisted, "but it has to." "No," they said. And then one of them showed me. The "teacher" brought the belt down on my palm. I winced, prepared for it to sting, but it didn't; I hardly felt the blow at all. What had made the sharp slap was the sound of the belt being snapped against itself. The "teacher" in this instance flicked the belt at the

²⁰ The focus of this game shifts to include the latest lessons on anonyms, homonyms or whatever sounds most impressive that they have recently studied. In this way a secondary level of power over was explored through play.

last second so that it rebounded against itself to make the sharp slapping noise, rather than actually hitting against my outstretched hand. When I asked, again, why they play the game, I am told, "We are practising so when the teacher hits us we won't cry." Indeed they do seem to be habituating themselves to laugh instead of cry. I also can't help but wonder if they are also in the process of moving from being those who are hit to those responsible for doing the hitting, practising to be mothers if not teachers.

What I observed was that it was the lowest grades that received the most beatings. By fourth, fifth grade, it had become more difficult to beat the boys. It is also important to teachers not to be seen to try and fail. They had been practising their response tactics as well, and had become quite adept at dodging blows and heading for the open door. As many times as I saw the girls playing "lashy" I observed boys heading for the woods.

In talking to me about their strategies for avoiding beatings, the 6b boys related their opinion that when they grow up, it will be their wives that are going to beat the children. When I asked why, one said, "because they are in the yard more," yet, another quickly adds, "but they will go to work too." This arose within a conversation about the boys' various strategies for avoiding beatings. There were several. However, they convey a few pointed stories to illustrate there is a limit to running. One boy pointed out that his grandparents waited and beat him in his sleep. He commented, "but I don't feel it so much when they beat me in my sleep". Another salient fact that arose within this conversation was whose beatings they fear the most in the school, and that was the one person I never saw lay a stroke on anybody, apparently because his reputation obviates the necessity to do so, that person was Mr. Lewis.

ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS RECONSIDERED

COMPARING FORMS

The simple conclusion to draw from the narratives examined here and contextualised by surrounding ethnographic observations is that the upper stream children, predominantly girls, have more of a continuum of communication practices that bridge Patwa and SJE, informal and formal situation, home and school cultures. Gee's conception of how discourse actually works, which incorporates recent

developments in cognitive science²¹, characterises discourse as a process of pattern recognition. He points out that what is most useful to researchers, students, or anyone needing to both communicate and interpret are not high level abstract patterns (theories), nor micro-level patterns applicable to very limited instances but middle-level, flexible patterns, ones that can be applied differently in different situations. It seems the girls are more practised at middle-level pattern use and have more middle-level patterns to draw on in the school arena than the lower stream boys do. If the main focus of the ethnographic research had been marbles, or even cricket, the conclusion I could be drawing at this point might be very different. Moreover the distinction cannot be so neatly drawn between boys and girls. The brief interaction with Joshua indicated that he was even more able to strategise about communicative tasks than the girls. Perhaps the minority of boys who do manage to stay in the upper stream class, need to be even better at the bridging tasks as the gap between school and community cultures is even wider than it is for girls.

COMPARING VIOLENCE

Open to further discussion as this conclusion about the forms of children's communication is, it is not nearly as problematic as drawing some conclusions about the themes of their narratives, namely those that have arisen throughout the last two chapters, the inter-related themes of violence, work and success²². The preceding chapter began with an exploration of boys' variable relationships to work, an embodied as well as articulated code-switching of behaviours. Yet, within the conversations the theme of violence began to emerge. In this chapter that theme has taken centre stage. As it has, girls' particular incorporation of violence within play and the attendant concerns of fairness and justice have been examined. Violence is also portrayed in relation to the work roles for which they are preparing. The primary metaphor of education that has come to the fore is one of discipline, the structured violence of "hard work", which includes learning how to take a beating.

²¹ Such as those usefully reviewed in Johnson and Erneling (1997).

²² Holland and Moser's (1997) study examines the linkages between violence, economic conditions and social capital in a community, stressing the spiralling effects that a sense of vulnerability creates in communities experiencing violence. Although their study concentrates on conditions in urban Jamaica, where 80% of violent crime is committed, the networks between urban and rural communities, make violence of increasing concern in rural areas.

What I hope has become apparent through the preceding pages is that children have differing ways of dealing with the violence in their lives. Through these strategies the terror or trauma of violence is made manageable in different ways. These strategies involve the inversion of it through carnivalesque play, the imitation or practice of it through play, even the ritualisation of it.

With some hesitation, I want to draw attention to the gender differences in play that works through violence. The girls found ways to formalise violence. One of their ways of dealing with being the recipient of violence was to caricature the form in which it was delivered. Boys, on the other hand, practice becoming adept at dodging the blow and escaping to the woods. Girls' acts of violence take place within scenarios that are restorative of structure, whereas boys' are seen as disruptive of it. Girls may throw stones, but don't carry knives. Women's violence is viewed as lesser, as quarrels, as part of friendship rather than as seriously threatening it, and ultimately as indispensable in their roles as disciplinarians. Grandmothers are not thought of as bullies. Why grandmothers are respected is not just because of their role as disciplinarians, but as nurturers, providers and endurers.

I hesitate to draw attention to these differences, as I am reluctant to contribute to the characterisation gender relations in Caribbean society along the lines of dichotomies as previous ethnographies have (Kerr 1963; Wilson 1973)²³. For it seems to me, that if one takes into consideration life-span trajectories, people's roles and the terms by which they can be described or characterised, change. The power dynamics within them change dramatically. The song lyrics reviewed in the last chapter testify to this powerfully.

Much of the play observed and narrated was an imitation of adult action and distinctly different from the imitation of adults that class lessons requires. Mamma Lashy is an imitation of adult culture as lived experience. The boys Dancehall lyrics and Jackie Chan enactments lean much more heavily on imitation of adult culture as media representation than they do on lived experience of adults. This is not to say that boys do not imitate adults as lived experience. Dancehall is a complex and rapidly interactive mix of representation and re-articulation (Hall 1992; Stolzhoff 2000). Instances of more immediate imitation of adults as lived experience could be

²³ For a critique of dichotomies see Besson (1998).

said to occur in the marble bouts, domino and football matches. The adults, again, being imitated are young adults. However, the boys narratives about the young adults they actually imitate and emulate are ambivalent. Some of their narratives even disavow a connection, stating they do not want to be like the young men who just “sit up on the wall” with nothing better to do. I did not ever see these boys parody older male adults in a carnival inversion in the way girls parodied older women in *Mamma Lashy*. This does not mean that boys do not do this, but if they did so, it was in a context to which I did not have access; it was not part of the public school yard cultural exchange. The song lyrics in the previous chapter clearly testify to their ability to parody older female adults and thereby subvert the terror of the encounter. The question surfacing here is, are their differences in the extent to which girls and boys play activities could be said to be carnivalesque? Are there gender differences in the ways play is used to open up re-negotiations of power dynamics in a public forum? Do the girls have more intermediate patterns to help them process the themes or issues important to them?

The boys’ practices seem more cynical, to have more in common with the reduced carnival version Bakhtin criticises. Is this because it draws more on media representations? Media representations’ ability to respond and partake in carnival play is limited. Moreover, media representations deploy the tropes and themes they deal with to focus on what is most profitable, which may not be what boys’ actually most need to work through or understand. The media’s intensified depiction of some situations to the exclusion of dealing with other aspects of life, means that gaps exist in the opportunities for boys to work through their own life situations and choices. These questions would require further careful consideration, rather than be taken as a conclusion that could be drawn from the material shared here. Certainly men were not absent from Caledonian Heights, but how they were there, what modes of interaction were available between boys and men of differing ages is something I know very little about.

An important exception to this characterisation of male absence is this, that within Rastafari practices there is a very strong practice of scaffolded apprenticeship, known as reasoning or grounding, which, from what I understand of it, closely resembles Socratic dialogue. The differences between Rastafari practices, the kinds of inversions or subversions of dominant power structures within its cultural practices and those more widely available, McFarlane (1998) thoughtfully assesses in his consideration of the emblematic images of the Rastafari Lion and the Jamaican

folklore version of Anansi. Men speak of being "grown" by a brother, powerfully reworking the educational growth metaphor towards a liberational, transformational model of self development (Forsythe 1985; Edmonds 1998). In a typical reworking of a word so that it sounds like what it means, Rastafari draw a distinction between their form of learning and mainstream practices of "head-decay-shun". How grounding arose out of more diffuse practices that preceded the development of Rastafari, or how it can now feed back into more mainstream programmes of male mentoring is also very much worth further study.

I have examined these questions before in relation to the Scottish classroom. There it seemed that the classroom served as an opportunity to open up play into a more meaningful process of negotiation. Mr. Lewis' religious education class may provide a similar opportunity.

In a larger context it is also worth pausing to consider what happens to Bakhtin's concept of carnival, when one equates children's play with carnival. What are the consequences when carnival is not an event set apart, as a defined set of days, but is an on-going process? What kind of subversive-ness is possible when it is not as concentrated as John Connu, which several times acted as the flash point for slave revolts? What happens when resistance is not a crisis but a chronic state of being, not a sudden fever taking the body politic by storm, but a slow persistent endemic infection? In threading his way between oversimplified interpretations of carnival as either, from a radical view, that of a fundamental challenge to the status quo, or, from the conservative view, nothing more than a safety valve, Humphreys (2000) encourages social theorist to treat the carnivalesque as an instance of a wider phenomenon of transgression, which needs to be examined both synchronically and diachronically, widening both the historical and social scope of analysis.

In this instance, widening the scope of analysis to look at how carnival dynamics beyond their use in children's play relate to the surrounding context gives rise to a paradox. To celebrate embodied knowledge in one instance, the boys' engagement with Dancehall, but to recoil from the conveyance of meaning through embodied communication, such as teachers' establishment of right and wrong boundaries through physical punishment, is inconsistent. The negative and positive implications of embodied knowledge are not easily separated. The knowledge of gesture and knowledge of action are intertwined, as are the emotions and messages they communicate (Altheide and Johnson 1994). Violence does not just communicate hate

or disapproval. The principal's defence of the ritual beating resonates, ironically, with a student's argument advanced for why teachers should not hit children. Her argument is, "They did not produce you out of their womb, they must not put their hand upon you," (Tape N). One can interpret this as meaning the act of creation entitles one to acts of destruction; one's love entitles one to inflict pain. Opposites turning into each other is a central dynamic of Bakhtin's reading of carnival. To use the concept of carnival that Bakhtin developed and its heavy reliance on market-place culture means also to take into account the fact that part of market-place culture was public floggings and executions. Whatever regenerative ethos, or philosophy, may be attributable to the dynamics at play in carnivalesque discourses, the tensions between grotesque imaginary scenarios and the lived reality of violence need to be kept in focus.

This is precisely where there is a disturbing gap in available literature. Nowhere perhaps are binary oppositions more unhelpful than those which are constructed between violence and non-violence, as many of the contributions in Howell and Willis (1989) point out²⁴. A much more nuanced depiction of agency, competition, cooperation is needed to talk about children's experience, understanding and use of force. The study of violence has concentrated on its extremes and most problematic manifestations. Given funding rationales, this is not surprising. The study of violence in relation to children or youth is particularly crisis-led, and, as noted for the study as a whole, the focus bypasses middle childhood (Lawrence, Steed, Young, 1984, Corsaro, 1997) to concentrate on older adolescents. Whilst Schmidt and Schröder's (2001) anthology acknowledges that the role of imagined and performed violence is important to consider, however, the role they might play in the escalation of violence from normative to transgressive is not explored. The basic definition of violence, which is physical hurt or violation, masks the many gradations of violence. My observation is that violations are often integral to the games and relationships of children within tacitly agreed boundaries. It is the transgression and negotiations of these boundaries that constitute the mutual identity formation of individual and communal definition.

²⁴ For instance, Robarchek usefully uncovers the determinism underlying much developmental psychology, for instance Archer (1994), which seeks to locate some reactive mechanism in "human nature". He goes on to suggest that aggression could be more usefully explored from a perspective "that takes purposeful human actions in service of a variety of culturally defined (and often contradictory) goals as the primary fact of human relations" (1998: 33).

Nordstrom and Robben's collection provides further insight, stating from the outset, "that violence is a dimension of people's existence, not something external to society and culture that 'happens to people'" (1995: 2). Yet, the focus gravitates, again, to the extremes rather than a working through of the more integral role violence may play more broadly within people's lives. The same can be said of works that focus specifically on violence in children's lives, such as Berman (2000) and Scheper-Hughes and Sargent (1998). Perhaps the extremes of violence are difficult to understand, so quickly seem to be "senseless", because the more ingrained presence of violence as a force constructive of identity and community is so poorly understood²⁵.

In this chapter an extreme form of violence focuses attention. This event stands alongside others, so everyday, so "playful", that without careful inspection it would be easy to miss that they, too, in some way, are about violence and embody violence. Both events are the resources from which children draw their understandings and interpretations of what it is possible to be, how it is possible to interact with others. They form part of the dialogue from which children's words take their meanings (Bakhtin 1981). If this dialogue is used as context, the boys' interpretation of and extrapolation from the Rapunzel story in the previous chapter takes on new meaning, and more poignant significance. The "dialogue" does not resolve itself into any easy conclusion. It does heighten an awareness of the complexity of children's lives.

²⁵ The most cogent, sensitively nuanced analysis of the role of violence and aggression in the formation of male identity is rather difficult to cite. It was an autobiographical performance by a first generation Jamaican American actor performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, entitle *Runt* (2001). As Denzin (1997) has noted the cross-fertilisation between performing arts and anthropology are opening up interesting avenues of examination and dissemination.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FORCING BULLIES INTO FORMS

AND FILLING IN THE BLANKS AT BRAEVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This penultimate chapter represents a return journey in which the problematic differences in social languages are once again examined. The familiarity of the context does not mean the cultural differences or social distances are less problematic. As a sort of coda, this chapter is a cautionary tale. It deals with fieldwork that almost didn't make it into the thesis—the findings were not complete, the collaborative element of the research design sadly lacking. Yet, in retrospect, the dynamics explored here need to be included in the north-south contrast. The community that this chapter concerns is part of the uneven development landscape. The meaning of post-development or under-development, as encoded in children's lives here, is important to consider.

Much of what I struggled for months to understand and foresee as a struggle to convey, was actually encoded in the first brief seconds of my engagement with the school:

At the school door, waiting by the entry phone speaker, a mum is saying to her daughter:

"If you don't go, you won't be doctors, lawyers or any of those other things you want to be."

And then, as her daughter continues to sniffle:

"I'll really scalp your arse and you'll be greetin' in front of every one of them,"
(Field Journal 1: 5).

The reality of the predicament and choices is encoded in the words of this mother. The clash of cultures between this perspective and that of the school is also encoded seconds later in the teacher's response.

We are let in. Down the hall the mum explains to the teacher about the trouble she has getting her daughter to school. The teacher replies levelly, in tones that could contain either reassurance or reproof, "she's always fine here." In other words, the culture that the staff at the school project is distinctly and intentionally different from that of the surrounding neighbourhood. Throughout the study evidence of a bridge, a continuum or a dialogue between one and the other was difficult to find. It was, in large part, a study of absences.

Within this chapter I look first at the structure of the culture as it is articulated by key members of staff. I then turn to look at what children articulate within that framework, particularly when knowledge and forms of expression from outside the school framework are allowed in. There is scant evidence that this does happen and, when it does, there is a lack of meaningful incorporation or exchange in either direction. What is articulated is then contrasted to what is practised. Discipline and bullying are recurrent themes; they represent different configurations of the use of force. There are differences in how these terms are understood and embodied by children and teachers. For the most part these differences remain submerged and the damage to communication or learning remains hidden as an absence. However, a few key incidents highlight the tensions between the diverging understandings when dramatic shifts in role or identity enactment occur. These dynamics raise compelling questions about consequences and alternatives, some of which cannot be answered, others for which there are partial answers or lines for further inquiry.

DISCIPLINE IN WORDS

Though I speak of a gap between school and community, it is against a background awareness that the council estate as a whole, in which this school has taught generations of children, has a long standing reputation for community education, participation and spirit. It hosted the longest running multi-agency family education project in the region until its closure during fieldwork due to growing pressure from area head teachers. The set pieces of community involvement were very much in place: the local minister contributed both by lecturing at an all-school assembly as well as overseeing the construction of the set for the Christmas pantomime. There was also the participation of a few stalwart community activists, staffing stalls at the Christmas craft fair, attending performances and serving on the school board.

Yet, as the head teacher, Ms. McHardy, comments herself in a candid interview:

Ms. McHardy: It's quite difficult
because quite often
the ethos of the community
conflicts with
the ethos of the school
like, "my ma says I've got to hit back"
and I have to say things like,
"Well
When you're outside the school gates
then whatever your mum says
fine
but when you're in the school perimeter, playground, building
these are the rules at school
and your mother knows that B: mmhmm
you know it's something I have to explain to parents
you know the school rules that we have (draws last three words out with
emphasis)
and ways of dealing with things
and I know it's not the way
they deal with them out there
and there is a conflict there
(pause)
But then what you're hoping
is that when these children grow up
that they will not have the same ethos
that the
that the, (long pause, laughter in the face of adversity)
that's the
(softer voice) general aim.
You know you're not gonna get there.
(slight pause)
At least
if you succeed with even one child then
you know, if they come out with // (sharp break change of tone)
I don't want to say culture
because they have their
their, you know, they have their own culture here.
But if they get out of that
'if somebody hits me I'm gonna hit them back"
ehm, attitude
I feel that
that's a success. (Interview, tape 31)

In this extract the head teacher touches upon some important points. What's not said, the gaps and pauses or the choice to express in laughter what may not fit into words, all contribute to a sense that what Ms. McHardy knows is from long experience, thirteen years in this school as either special education teacher or head teacher, experience that is not readily translatable to an outsider. Ms. McHardy stresses in this passage that the differences between school and community cultures are something of which both parents and teachers are aware. She emphasises this by

stressing the word “know” in reference to both herself and parents. The knowing here is also implied to be one that goes without saying—is the product of lived experience, not a formal exchange of ideas in a discussion. At the end of the interview she gives an example of the fluency with which children swear on the playground and their ability to switch off that kind of language in the classroom, indicating that the children, as well as the parents, are practised in a knowledge that allows them to code switch. However, this comment is said with some amazement, as if this kind of knowledge is in contrast to the lack of knowledge either expected of them or evidenced by them in more formal learning terms.

The other important phrase that stands out in her response is the assertion, “they have their own culture,” – one which she is indicating she wouldn’t presume to change or judge. I ask her to expand on this comment in terms of class culture. What comes out in the discussion is that she is from a working class background, as are Mr. Ruhl, the senior teacher at the school, and quite a number of other staff. What also becomes apparent is that they have made an important transition through their professional career to middle class culture, in other words, that they are living proof of education’s claims to raise one’s living standards. I ask if she draws upon her working class childhood to understand the community that she works in. Ms. McHardy is very adept at managing appearances and steering interactions with parents in the way most likely to maintain both unquestioned authority and street credibility. Yet, in her reply she makes a careful distinction between her background and that of the surrounding community:

Ms. McHardy: Although I can say I come
from a working class background
I don’t come from anything like
what the kids come from here B: uh huh

...
I remember doing sociology at university
what was it they talked about?
the working---
something or other
but it meant the good working class
and the working class roughs B: small laugh
and I could categorise myself as the good working class

....
can you even call kids in this area working class?
well, it’s difficult, it’s hard ... (Interview, Tape 31)

Some of the uncertainty embedded in this response is illustrated by the dilemmas posed at enrolment time and the questions that have to be “skated around”, as the families simply do not fit within the categories on the form. In contrast to the

distinction Ms. McHardy draws between her working class identity and those of the families around her is another distinction she makes between her approach and a more middle class one.

Ms. McHardy: I have to say I sometimes do wonder

I come from a working class background

and I find it difficult to accept

sometimes

what people say and do

and I do wonder how middle class

I think middle class people come in

they think they are doing good to the poor

missionary kind of work (laugh)

not in this school

(indistinct comment about another school)

their mission to improve these children

B: (slowly, picking my way in a hesitant voice, trying to pick up on elements in the tone of Ms. McHardy's voice in order to articulate in words a possible version of what she is conveying in her tone)

and maybe inappropriate ideas about what would improve them

and what they need improving from--?

mm, mhmm. (Interview, Tape 31)

McHardy: (strongly) Well yeh,

Ms. McHardy seems to be expressing here the same frustration with progressive teachers that Delpit (1999) surveyed. However, the emphasis at this school included only half of Delpit's recommended response. There is emphasis on explicitly teaching the tools of power, but not an emphasis on discussing why these are the tools of power, or if they should be. The heavy emphasis on Personal and Social Development in the school is geared to conformity, not transformation, inclusion or empowerment. Both the head teacher and senior teacher's working class backgrounds and personal experience of persevering through various kinds of adversity may have much to do with the shaping of the school culture. That culture can be described as characterised by:

- Clearly defined roles and tasks
- Pride in collective achievement
- Loyalty based on a sense of protecting that collective pride
- Strict formulaic teaching with a strong emphasis on providing structure.

It was the senior teacher's classroom in which I spent most of my time. I was directed towards his class because of the head teacher's confidence in his ability to portray the school in its best light. In interviews as well as in his everyday practice,

Mr. Ruhl demonstrated he was a very articulate, intelligent, dedicated and diversely talented teacher. Yet, my introduction to his classroom teaching style set up conflicts with which I was to struggle throughout fieldwork. On my first scheduled appointment to meet the class, I am making my way around the school playground, struggling with the impression of how bleak the environment is in comparison with other schools I have visited, when a sharp stern voice booms out of the building berating children for scraping their chairs and not lifting them on to the table swiftly and tidily enough. I am stunned by the sheer volume of the voice, the sheer lungpower, and yet, the control. There is no strain; this is not someone shouting at the top of their voice, but in a standard way. Yet, the sound is more than any I could muster. The rest of the way around the building I am left to reassemble the positive regard with which I hope to greet this teacher in order to develop a collaborative working relationship with him. The force of his voice strikes me as excessive and continues to throughout fieldwork. Yet, this hallmark of his teaching style has to be placed within a context of other forces and problematic alternatives. Definitely the strength of his voice dominated the classroom discourse and set up unique dynamics that shaped the possibilities for the children's responses.

In large bold letters at the top of the rule board that greets one upon entering Mr. Ruhl's class, is the school's motto:

TEACHERS ARE HERE TO TEACH. LEARNERS ARE HERE TO LEARN

Seen from a perspective that questions constructions of the child (James and Prout 1997; Jenks 1996) one notices the omissions in this configuration. It precludes the possibility that children can teach or inform or that teachers might have something to learn from the students.¹ Yet, Mr. Ruhl's interpretation of the motto stresses its enabling meaning. As Mr. Ruhl asserts in a public meeting, "This school has turned itself around." Presumably there was a time when teachers weren't able to teach, nor learners, learn. There was a lack of achieving any activity, much less going beyond the bare minimum to experiment with innovative forms of education. The turn around from this perspective is largely due to the setting of firm boundaries.

¹ In getting to know the students, I ask a couple of the boys to show me how they make paper airplanes. This activity is censured by Mr. Ruhl. Later when it comes up in conversation with the head teacher, Mr. Ruhl explains I was teaching them how to make airplanes. When I explain actually they were teaching me, they look at me as if this is a very strange activity for a child and an adult to be engaged in—certainly not the sort of thing to be encouraged in their school.

When I spoke to Mr. Ruhl mid-way through the first term, he emphasised the school motto as being key to “turning the school around”.² He attributed this turn around to a change of head teacher. As the senior teacher in the school, he and the head teacher worked very closely together. The frequent times I overheard them slagging each other off or code switching into local slang in off-duty moments was evidence of the strong rapport and shared outlook between them. In discussing the discipline strategy, which changed the culture of the school, Mr. Ruhl emphasised the importance of the programme being implemented throughout the school and the pivotal role the head teacher played in handing out awards as well as penalties. The teacher is not isolated in the class to deal with discipline one way, while another teacher takes another tack. There is an overall routine that everyone adheres to. Mr. Ruhl said the rationale is to always give a reason and be consistent. He contrasted this consistency to the surrounding chaos. He characterised punishment that children received at home as swinging between extremes, parents ignoring outrageous behaviour in one instance, belting children for minor infringements in another (Field Document Nov. 2:).

CONSTRUCTED SPACE, CONSTRUCTED CHILDREN

In speaking of how to handle problems, Mr. Ruhl de-emphasised the dramatic qualities. His voice smoothly enumerated the steps in the routine procedure. The individual child’s needs, wants, actions were de-emphasised and subsumed under the importance of following through the routine. He described this routine as enabling a learning environment where there is an emphasis on what children can do, not on what they cannot do. As he explained, discipline is to do with respect, respect for their need to learn.

Mr. Ruhl: I think, hopefully that’s one of the words I use most in the class, and that’s respect. (interview, Tape 3)

However, I rarely heard Mr. Ruhl use the word respect, apart from one “circle time” session when the term self-respect was discussed. Mr. Ruhl’s assumption that the children will respect him was clearly evident, so much so as to go without saying.

² Later in the term at a public meeting to discuss future plans for the schools in the area Mr. Ruhl again asserts the school has turned itself around and that a note should be made of this in any further decisions.

Mr. Ruhl's respect for the children also went without saying, but was a much more elusive concept to interpret. He assessed their work in very careful terms. He gave them a great deal of time to themselves to draw, or colour in while reading to them. He was careful not to invade their physical space in a threatening way. To check a student's behaviour, rather than stand over them, he would arch an eyebrow or simply walk to the board at the back of the room and put a tick up by their name for bad behaviour.³ Sarcasm was very muted, more implied than asserted. There was always a sense of distance and cool calm. Even when he used his voice to surround the class with its force, there was a sense of detachment, conveying the sense that this, too, is part of the routine, not a departure from it.⁴ Mr. Ruhl marked out clear boundaries that narrowly defined the acceptable child or pupil as someone to be seen and not heard, to be docile and to attend, that is, to wait upon instruction. Anything outside of this definition was not recognised. It is not threatening or even plausible, it is described as nonsense, cheekiness or silliness or is dismissed as unknowable or unthinkable:

"Why you are smiling, I've no idea!" (Field Journal 4: 87), or, "I told you to put that up back at your desk, so why you still have it I don't know. Go and put it away, you're holding everyone else up," (Field Journal 4: 84).

This insistence on routine as comprised of sequential steps was emphasised in the class's transition from one part of the school building to another. Mr. Ruhl demanded quiet and controlled movements when the class moved around the building. At every set of doors the children must stand in line quietly while a pair is chosen to hold the door. If, while waiting in that line or while passing down through the doors and through the hall, any deviation from these standards was detected, the whole class returned to the preceding stage and began the process again. The diagram of the building below is numbered to indicate the many junctures at which the class may be sent back to the prior juncture. Rarely did the class make it from class to gym or class to dining hall without one or often two repetitions. Four or five were not unheard of. So routinised does this process become that on the rare

³ It often occurred to me that Foucault would have had a field day analysing this setting. The dynamics lend themselves to his terminology, such as the pan opticon in this instance. Despite certain reservations about his work, it is as if he whispers over my shoulder certain suggestions, details of description to put in, or leave out.

⁴ The few times boys took excessively aggressive swipes at each other in class, rather than fuelling the aggression of the encounter by using his loud voice, he makes no comment on their behaviour what so ever but swiftly redirects their activities in opposite directions away from each other.

occasion when I accompanied the class while under the direction of another teacher, it seemed odd to move swiftly through the building without retracing our steps.

Figure 8.1: Reversal points in movement through building

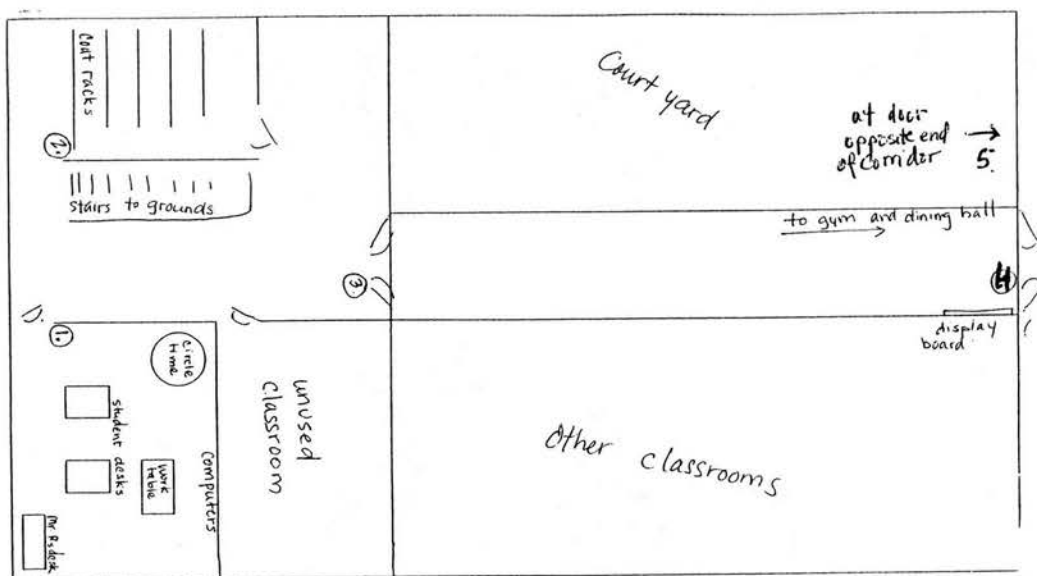


Diagram shows interior of classroom and upper floor. Numbered points indicate places where class may be ordered back to previous position.

Mr. Ruhl prepared meticulously for his classes and used the resources within the classroom to reinforce the learning objectives he set. In a controlled way, there were many opportunities for individual expression and recognition. Several different art projects were offered throughout the year. The class designed Egyptian panoramas, assembled and painted little wooden boats, drew to music, designed their own tartan plaids, did plays in German, set up a community store. Yet, the overall tone in which such activities were administered reduced them to a routine divested of opportunities to link these activities to their experiences and identities beyond the school walls. Tasks were always broken down into component parts. Mr. Ruhl provided the links between them. Critical reflection about their overall meaning or relevance was not in keeping with this division of labour. In terms of Bakhtin's utterances, the borrowing in this classroom was one way traffic. As the school motto suggests, the children borrow the teacher's utterances and not the other way around.

The control of narrative played a strong part in maintaining the daily routine. Transitions between activities were always framed by a summary of what had been accomplished, how well they had behaved and clear indications of what they were to achieve, what kind of behaviour was expected and would be rewarded.

You did very well this morning. I saw lots of people concentrating. Let's hope you can do as well this afternoon. (Field Journal 1: 60)

Up until now rehearsals have gone very well. People have waited on their cues and been very sensible. I'm very disappointed in three people. Two people, who seem to know their lines very well, are being very silly. It would be a shame if we had to replace them after all that hard work. (Field Journal 1: 72)

RECONSTRUCTED MARGINS

This constructed identity is an era or world removed from the students' engagement with popular culture and the identity, both sexual and social, which they are beginning to express through their clothes, body piercing and other image markers. Yet, the docility and passivity that he demanded, he unquestioningly received a great deal of the time. The contradiction between the infantile role they must play in school and that of their out of school existence was one tolerated as if unremarkable. Yet, the contrast, particularly for some of the girls, was quite stark. This contrast, as well as a delayed code-switch, is exemplified in the following passage from an out-of-class interview:

Jill: Um, no
I don't like reading

Beth: What about you, Joan?

Jill: You get all boring books in the school library
I read "It" (allusion to previous mention of Stephen King)

Beth: It?

Jill: Aye,
It's the clown that lives down the stairs
And steals the children.

Beth: ewwww (acting scared)

Jill: Sometimes, I like Catherine Cookson

Beth: Kathleen Cookson?

Beth: Oh, right,
I here she's really good.

Jill: MMMhm

Beth: So, are most of the people in your family older than you?

Jill: Everybody, (as if it's not so nice)
except for my nephew

Beth: Right

Jill: My sister's twenty two
My brother's sixteen
And you dinnae want to know my mum an dad's age

Beth: NO, that's okay.

Jill: ah, ??//

Beth: Do they read some:

Jill: Aye
My dad disnae read,
Well, he disnae
Enjoy readin
But my mum does
She likes Stephen King.

Beth: Oh does she?
So do you borrow her books? Jill: Aye
And read?
And Catherine Cookson?
Are those her books too?

Jill: No, they're my grannies

Although Jill initially commented that she did not like to read, her subsequent remarks indicated she read a lot—on a popular adult level on a par with the adults in her family. The reading she did not like, and did not particularly excel at, is the reading of schoolbooks, in large font, consisting of 6-10 page chapters with illustrations. Her remarks resonated with other research that documented a sharp contrast between competency at home and seeming incompetence at school (Moll 1994).

Concerned to find activities that might bridge the disparity between home and school competencies illustrated by Jill's remarks, I negotiated with Mr. Ruhl to be present on a regular basis for circle time. Circle time, where Personal and Social Development (PSD) was concentrated upon, suggested itself as a possible time in which children might have space to express themselves to a greater degree than the one word or phrase answers that the rest of the routine required. An examination of a story in the round exercise led by Mr. Ruhl revealed the parameters children's

words must stay within, even in this more expressive context. Routinely, circle time began with Mr. Ruhl prompting them to repeat back to him some formulation he had told them. For example, "all right who can tell me the five things we learn in circle time?" A girl volunteers, "thinking, concentrating, talking . . ." and another chips in, "looking," before Mr. Ruhl confirms their correct answers, (Field Journal 1: 59). This might be the sort of interaction commonly heard in a lower primary class, primary one or two, but this is a primary six/seven class. Also, this interaction would have been very common in the Jamaican school. The class then played concentration, memory or sequencing games. Then the class was encouraged to complete a sentence that began, "I feel . . ." On this occasion it was, "I get annoyed on the playground when . . ." The story that followed is an expansion of this fill in the blank pattern that has been established.

On this day Mr. Ruhl began the activity by explaining the rules of the game, "pass the story", then turned to give ticks to Tracey, Ian, James, Robert and Jack for not paying attention and carrying on a side activity of their own. This gave Jack three ticks. Three ticks and one received a penalty card that brought them to the head teacher's attention for a lecture in front of the class. Five ticks was grounds for expulsion for the day. Ticks could be given for any display of disrespect, non-compliance or dissent, such as sighing audibly, mumbling or refusing to drop one's gaze. Michelle, who was special person for the day, was sent with the yellow card down to the head teacher's office. Michelle asked Chrissy to chum her down, and didn't look at Mr. Ruhl on her way out.

The game starts⁵:

ROUND ONE

Mr Ruhl: Once upon a time there was a little girl

Stephanie: She lived with her gran and mum.

Jack: pass

Laura: Pass

Fiona: Pass

Jackie: On Monday she went to the forest

Rebecca: Pass

James: Pass

Joan: Pass

Robert: Pass

Tracey: Her name was Fiona Floppy Ears

Jill: pass

Alicia: She took her dog with her

⁵ The transcript was constructed from notes scribbled at the time, and a seating map. Phrasing lines and intonation cannot be represented, and wording may very slightly (Field Journal 4: 84-86).

Ian: and it died

ROUND TWO

Mr. Ruhl: and her dog escaped off the lead

Stephanie: She went back home to get her granny's dog
to find her own dog

Jack: And his name was spot

Laura: (hesitates)

Mr. Ruhl: (encourages her to contribute something makes a suggestion, she
echoes it)

Fiona: she lost her granny's dog

Jackie: Then she went to get her Mum's dog

Rebecca: And the lead broke

Robert: She heard the collar ring

Mr. Ruhl: asks Ian and James to leave the circle for continued side comments,

Tracey: She found the three missing dogs and one of them had been stabbed

Jill: pass

Alicia: Mr Ruhl what attacked it?

Mr. Ruhl: A wolf?

other voices: How did she know? She thought it was?

ROUND THREE

Mr. Ruhl: She carried it home

Stephanie: and phoned the RSPCA

Jack: Pass

Laura: Pass

Fiona: When the mum was on the phone the two bulldogs ran out.

Jackie: and a fox came.

Rebecca: pass

Joan: pass

Robert: The two dogs see the wolf and go back in the door.

Tracey: Fiona don't see them, she goes out to the forest, falls down a cliff and
breaks her leg and the two dogs carry her home.

(Ian no longer in circle)

Jill: pass

Alicia: The wolf saw the girl and the two dogs and started following them.

ROUND FOUR

Mr. Ruhl: (gives instructions that this will be the last round to finish the story)

Stephanie: pass

Jack: pass

Laura: pass

Fiona: The wolf crawled down the chimney and ate the granny.

Jackie: The wolf fell down the cliff and died.

Rebecca: pass

(James no longer in circle)

Tracey: The wolf took a drink from the well and swelled up, the father came
home, slit him open and the granny and mystery person came out. They filled
the wolf with heavy things and he fell down the well.

This shared story conformed tightly to a folk tale structure, and remained topic centred. An early attempt to disrupt it by Ian, "and the dog died," was ignored and substituted for by Mr. Ruhl. In comparison with the shared story examined in the

earlier chapters, many differences are noticeable. Most noticeable is the extent and ways in which children invest themselves in the story. The children's contributions remain very short. There are no attempts to make sound effects or voice the characters, no attempts to substitute characters for ones they identify with more closely, and no attempt to play with the teacher or carnivalise his identity. Ian and James' behaviour, which can be interpreted as going outside the structure to carry on a side narrative or reinterpretation of the activity, was not tolerated and they were excluded. During the first round not much is offered by children to move the story forward; the contributions were non-committal. It was Mr. Ruhl's replacement of Ian's contribution that suggested the main action of the story. In the second round an imitative pattern was set up where subsequent dogs follow the first. It was the round in which most children participated, perhaps as it was easiest to know what kind of contribution was acceptable.

In the third round there were some interesting variations. The RSPCA was mentioned, giving the story for the first time a time setting, which, unlike folk tales, is not universal, but modern. The next contribution reinforced the setting as being in their own surroundings by alluding again to the phone and identifying the dogs as a breed common on the scheme, bull dogs. Tracey, who was one of the most assertive children in the class and in the top reading group, at this point took control of the story, switching allegiances as it were, as she often did between resisting with the boys and shining for the teacher. This switch was signalled by an explanatory phrase, "Fiona doesn't see them," which served to break from the plot line suggested by Robert's previous contribution. Her contribution was the longest yet and contained four action points: (1) goes to the forest (2) falls down a cliff (3) breaks her leg (4) the two dogs carry her home. Until her turn, each child had only offered one. These action points incorporate earlier images and actions but reconfigure the pattern, dogs rescue girl, rather than girl rescues dog, turning it upside down in an acceptable way.

The reaction to this longer contribution was muted, literally; the next round has the most passes. After Tracey's assertion, the other contributions to the story were from Alicia, who was in the slowest group and may not have picked up on the social dynamics, Fiona, who was the only student who could out-read Tracey and drew on the authority of a standard folklore text to bolster her contribution, and Jackie, who made a bid to end the story by killing off the wolf. Tracey ignored Jackie's contribution, much like Mr. Ruhl ignored Ian's earlier attempt to kill the dog. She

then plunged into another lengthy passage with seven action points that combines the ending of "Little Red Riding Hood", and "The Wolf and the Nanny Goat's Kids". In the latter story the nanny goat finds the wolf that has tricked her children and eaten them. After his feast he is asleep. She slits him open, out pop her children, and they put heavy things in his stomach in their place, which cause his demise. In Tracey's version of events the nanny goat was replaced by the saving male authority figure more reminiscent of "Little Red Riding Hood". Her tour de force went undisputed as the definitive ending to this activity.

The boy's contribution to the story activity was silenced half way through and was characterised by their resistance before they are excluded. Their resistance took another form earlier in the session. Ian's completion to the sentence "I get annoyed when . . ." was to say, "I annoy". This was a variation on his usual response when the topic of violence or power comes up. It was tantamount to admitting he is a bully. The point of these exercises was to get those who annoy to appreciate what it feels like to be annoyed. He was asked, "have you ever been annoyed?" His answer is a simple, "no" (Journal 1: 60-62).

Ian's consistent contributions to circle time resonate with a poem I happened upon while researching children's literature, entitled *Olympic Special*, by Roger McGough and Michael Rosen. In part it reads like this:

I got him in a headlock
over the knee
on the ground
knee on the chest
and then—
well . . . then to the head's office

While we were waiting outside the office
he said "Look Rosie
the head'll say "What do you think you were doing?"
then he'll say "Why"; He always says, "Why"
Say you don't know. You were being stupid.

We go in
The head says to Mick Hanek
"what do you think you were doing?"
"I don't know, sir" Mick Hanek says
He turns to me
"Why were you fighting" he says
"I was being stupid sir" I say.
"You're telling me!" he says
"Can't you stop being stupid?" he says
"No sir" says Mick Hanek
"For god's sake just try will you" he says

()

Hanek said, "I always tell him I was being stupid because that's what he thinks. Then he can't think of anything else to say can he?"

Ian's consistent put down of himself could be read as an alarming lack of self esteem, but the nonchalant throw away delivery disrupts this interpretation. No one in the circle responded to reassure him; it effectively deflects attention away from him, as if it were a strategical move, something he knew he just has to say, just as much a part of his school routine as many of Mr. Ruhl's routine utterances. A third form of resistance was under the table hand signals. Mr. Ruhl's vigilant surveillance of all activity above work surfaces seemed to drive resistance, literally, under cover and worked to reinforce the importance of a language of gestures and signs carried on below them-- inaudible defiance. As I was to learn later, sign language, as well as doodles that imitate graffiti including gang initials were the medium of polyphony, the means by which community based communication found a nook or cranny in which to be present in the classroom.

BULLIES IN CLASS DISCOURSE

The "I feel annoyed . ." sentence completion activity in the session examined above was part of a larger project to address bullying. In addition to the concentration on the theme of bullying at circle time and a playground programme designed to transform P6-7 pupils from potential bullies into playground buddies, complete with special pennies to wear on the day one was designated as such, bullying also became a theme for language arts. Students at all the reading levels were assigned a chapter book about bullying as homework reading. They were also assigned to write stories about bullying. The project ended with a class test on bullying (see appendix). In the next term the class developed plays they presented for the all school assembly on the topic.

Despite all these forms of reinforcing the discourse of bullying, and many examples of the girls in the class dutifully parroting the right phrases in response to questions on bullying, there were signs that the bullying discourse was not helping them make sense of their normal social interaction. Perhaps that was not the point; the point was only to curtail or modify that interaction at school, as Mrs. McHardy's comments quoted at the beginning of the chapter indicate. This was reflected in the

interpretation of a key term in the bullying discourse, once they moved out of the formulaic use of it in responding to the teacher's questions.

Consistent with the strategy of breaking things down into component parts, pupils were assigned to create an acrostic poem, using each letter in the word "bullied" to start a phrase describing how it would feel to be bullied, such as the example below:

Broken hearted when you feel bad about yourself
Unpleasant if someone feels not enjoyable
Lonely if you feel sad because you are on your own
Lost if you have no one to play with
Irrelevant means you are nothing to do with anybody
Eager to make new friends
Down-hearted you feel sad and dejected. (Joan)

The intention, as in circle time, was to illicit feelings of sympathy for the bullied. However, the complex web of psychological factors amongst various members of the class made this outcome unlikely. Certainly it was a very real possibility that the string of undesirable connotations attached to the word "bullied" could have made it even more unlikely that any student would want such connotations attached to themselves, and, therefore, much less likely that they would report bullying when it happened to them. The dynamics of self-esteem were not as simple as they were portrayed as being within the school discourse, with unfortunate consequences.

REAPPROPRIATING THE CLASS DISCOURSE

In the school discourse on bullying the term "low self esteem" was introduced as a concept that could apply to both victim and bully. Predominantly it was a term the class practised using in their acrostic poems. However, in the chapter books they read it was often cited as a reason for why a bully bullies. Solutions to bullying often revolved around addressing the bully's underlying low self-esteem. Later interviews revealed there was a different kind of logic at work in applying this term to real life situations. In two separate instances as girls began to talk more freely about the topic, they told me in confident voices that Jack, in one instance, had "high self esteem" and men in general, because, as they demonstrated, men can batter women into submission.

The first draft of stories on bullying were composed with the help of an outline provided by Mr. Ruhl and were prefaced by an activity in which they sort a group of adjectives into columns headed "The Bully" "The Friend" "The Victim". Yet,

despite this scaffolding, a reality consistent with their re-interpretation of self esteem crept into the stories that contravenes one of the main tenets of the bullying policy: tell an adult you trust.

Story One

One day Davy was going to a football match. But this big boy called Webbo jumped out on him and said "Hi, Wally the Wimp" Where are you going?" I am going to the football match." "No you aren't" "Yes I am you pig. "What did you call me". A pig. Then Webbo battered Davy up and down the place. He had a bleeding nose and a cut knee. He went home crying. His mum said "Why are you crying she said." I fell over the wall when I was climbing. You should not be climbing with your new shoes on. Opppps! Soorry. You better be. (Joan)

Story Two

Sammy was going to school when she got to the school gates Robby came up behind her and hit her over the head. Gary and Peter were laughing and said "Good job ha ha ha". When she got up Sammy had a nosebleed she started to cry. Robby Gary and Peter were in a corner in the playground making a plan for home time. At home time Sammy was nearly at home they came up behind her and tripped her up and ran away. When she fell she banged her eye she got home her mum said what happened Sammy said she tripped up. Sammy's brother Tomas were their friend so Sammy made up with them. (Chrissy)

In both stories, the children refused to tell their parent. Joan's story in places is carried completely by conversational interaction, the story disappears almost into the discourse of the streets. Her use of conversation draws on a cultural expertise from outside the classroom, much like the boys in Mr. Noble's class in Jamaica drew on their visual expertise in drawing their "comic strips". The structural distance between working class Scots, as Joan experiences it outside of school, and classroom discourse is much less than the distance between Patwa and SJE. Yet, I am left wondering if the same problems Craig (1976) delineates for Patwa learners of SJE may also apply to her, in both a more subtle and yet, in some ways more confounding form. In contrast, Chrissy's story has almost no dialogue, relying on movement and action. In her story the bullying crisis was mediated by a larger family network, which alluded to the complexity of relations in the community and the role of intertwined extended family and friendship networks. Like the early stories at the other Scottish school, evaluation is not emphasised, there is no clear moral at the end, and the child's agency within the story is ambiguous. There is a feeling this is just another day in the life, with no resolution or decisive change in on-going events arising as a result.

Interestingly, the one boy, Jack, with difficulties controlling his temper and thus one of the more likely candidates for the label bully, produced a text that most closely conformed to school expectations. In his, the victim tells Mr. Ruhl, who brings him into the safety of the school building. The tension between the victim and the bullies is resolved almost magically when the victim scores eight goals in the football game at break time and "was never bullied again."

Mr. Ruhl gave me permission to photocopy these stories but was anxious that I did not draw too many conclusions from them. As he explained, "they are not their best work; we haven't had a chance to go over them yet," (Field Journal 1: 103). His remark left me wondering what would have been edited out in altered drafts, or just what kind of work would have been done to resolve the contradictions between street and school rules for dealing with bullying. Here is one of the many situations in which it is difficult to interpret the extent or intent of communication between teacher and pupils. Were these stories written in direct defiance of school norms or oblivious to them? Are the stories evidence of a trust on the part of the girls that Mr. Ruhl will understand and accept their version of bullying, or were they written with indifference to his interpretation? The lessons that followed did not raise the contradictions, but yet again reinforced the school rules. If there was a discussion of the contradictions, Mr. Ruhl, for whatever reasons, chose to have it when I was not around.

CONTRASTING COMMUNITY BASED DISCOURSE

An oral story about bullying told to me by Jill during an out of class interview diverges even further from the narrative that would coincide with the school's bullying rules. This narrative also reveals the complexity of neighbourhood dynamics, as well as the unwritten rules of the street.

Joan: MMhmmmm

Jill: There was this laddie
I was up at my cousin's bit
And he was ten
And my cousin was only
six at the time right
and he was at that side
and my wee cousin was at the back side
and so
he went over and said
whose that lassie beside that other lassie

and she said, that's my big
 that's my big cousin
 and she was meanin me
 he said to her
 go over there and say she's a wee tramp right
 but she said no I willnee
 and cause she's my big cousin
 and the laddie said
 well I'm not bothered if she's your big cousin
 just go over right now and do it.
 so she went over and said
 that laddie says you're a tramp.
 So I said ignore the laddie
 And and
 My wee cousin went over and said
 I'm just ignorin ye
 And that laddie
 Said
 Well if you ignore me I'll just get my wee cousin to batter ye
 And so he went over and got his wee cousin
 And they started **fightin** each other
 And my my auntie was lookin out the window
 And ?????she went in and stopped it
 And then my wee cousin said
 Well he started it cause he said to me
 Go over and say that lassie, she's a tramp.
 And he said, no I didnae cause I
 I just—
 I said I was wantin' to make pals with her.
 (Me: MMMM—I get the point of the story here)
 He was really lyin.
 And
 And
 My auntie
 gave my wee cousin a row for it
 (Me: mmmmmm)
 cause she didnae really believe her
 because she was wee-er than the big laddie
 she said "stop causin trouble"
 **what's her name
 Cindy, cindy that's her name
 my wee cousin (laughs a little nervous)**
 she said
 she said
 "stop causin trouble Cindy
 and make up with the laddie"
 and she says
 "No, I'm not makin up with him
 cause he's a wee lyin
 lyin pig
 (Me: mmmmm)
 and because of it
 my auntie hit her.
 So she woundae believe it

Because **She's** six and **he's** ten.
(Me: mmmmmmm)
So, no ??? didnae believe
Me: Joan is that why
In your story
The person that gets bullied
Doesn't tell his mum the truth?

Pause

Joan: 'cause
Cause if it was **Us**
We wouldnae say anything
Cause we'd be too scared to say anything to the teachers
In case we did get our bully ---(unclear, possibly in trouble)

The story is about deceptive appearances. The point of the story lies in the tension between what is said, what is intended, and the unstated assumption of what makes for a fair fight on the streets. The situation and the rules were more complex than the school version. The version of parenting depicted in this story was not the chaotic one sketched by teachers in contrast to the order of the school. In her story rules and logic are applied; there is still a principle of justice at work. Joan followed this story with another, in which the lying bully, who says something provocative and then tries to portray himself to the observing adult as innocent, is found out. In both stories, as well as in several other conversations I heard, the primary rule applied by children to their own fights was that they should be between persons of the same age. Even those who wish to bully do not do so with their own hands but find a suitable proxy. This basic principle was in direct opposition to the rules of force operative in the school, where force exerted by peers was forbidden and only adults of a much greater stature were allowed to exert force, albeit force on different terms.

BULLIES AND DISCIPLINE IN PRACTICE

The several ways in which bullying was addressed as a curriculum subject simplify the dynamics of force. They also relied on an unquestioning trust of the adults at the school. In contrast, the force dynamics imposed by the strict discipline code required a different set of responses to adults and made competing demands on children's loyalties. The contrast embedded within mundane everyday activities came sharply into focus when that routine came under pressure. As noted in the last chapter, ruptures in the regular routine can reveal important underlying dynamics. In

this instance, a glimpse was afforded of the forces arrayed against the school structure, which might have acted to retrench it.

THE PERFORMANCE OF EXCLUSION

It is an exceptional day, one which Mr. Ruhl has narrated for the children as being very important. The culmination of weeks of practice, it is their gymnastics display for the entire school and invited guests. In the morning they are practising. The P.E. teacher is approving last minute changes to routines. Several girls are working with her on a new mount. She is trying to decide whether to let them attempt a manoeuvre she is not sure they have mastered. It is a forward roll off the vault. Among those attempting it are Stephanie and Tracey. Jack sways in flipping programs and gives them to Ms. Board, the P.E. teacher. I am not sure if she asks his opinion, but, while he is there, she turns towards him as if asking his opinion. He nods and she decides to let them do it. The girls are excited. Stephanie excitedly thanks Jack for supporting them. He totters out.

Back in the class, those who have not been awarded a speaking part in the Christmas panto and are relegated to a part in the chorus have had a day or two to reconcile themselves. Their earlier opposition has given way to colouring in and doodling on their song booklets. Joan has coloured in her singing pamphlet with purple and green pen and makes a show of her other coloured pens. She lets me look at the book. It is a strange combination of signature pieces from the Walt Disney movie, such as "Some Day My Prince Will Come", and "Whistle While You Work," some old fashioned crooners, as well as "When I'm Sixty Four".

Mr. Ruhl goes over instructions for the gymnastic performance and then has them get out a sheet of paper for the spelling test and number it. We then line up to go to the gym. We pause for a long while at the second door. I am reading the class's time machine stories displayed on a nearby board. Michelle's seems to be all about its creature comforts. She seems to have taken Mr. Ruhl's instructions to emphasise descriptive detail quite seriously. It reads like a catalogue. Many of the offerings are formulaic, hers the most concentrated text of breaking things down into their component parts.

When there is a ruckus in the line, I move in closer, but the damage seems to already be done. Mr. Ruhl is on his way back to quell it himself. As I had been reading the wall display, I had heard Jack say he is not going to do mats. I ignore this and put it down to last minute jitters. Apparently the girls standing beside him, including Stephanie, did not. Mr. Ruhl comes back and the girls are agitated as they recount what Jack has said. Mr Ruhl's response quickly accelerates from giving him a row, to an escalating "how dare you, how dare you," which culminates in barring Jack from participating in the programme at all. Jack bears this silently but unrepentantly. His chin is jammed into his chest, his eyes glowering at Mr. Ruhl's knees. He utters the odd mumble. He is sent down to the office. The girls work out an alternative routine without Jack very quickly. I am sad that he has lost this important chance to show off an activity he excels at within the school structure, given his dyslexia and other complicating factors.

The programme itself commences with Ms. Board placing her hand at the chest and back of each child, nodding her head to the music to get them in pace and then pushing them forward every four beats to the music. It is very marshal , circa WW II, it must date from that period or earlier. The audience is clapping in time to the music. It is difficult not to be proud of them, to be drawn into the mood. Parents are straining to see. In the floor routines, the children imitate automatons as they approach and finish their sequences to synthesised, non-melodic music. During the mounts the boys sometimes go over at a furious speed in the splits or with knees bent under them. It is impressive. At the end Ms. McHardy gives a little speech, which becomes a lecture on the different learning skills this demonstrates, such as co-operation. The class is up front facing the audience and very solemn through this. Then they do their farewell routine, which is to "So long, Farewell" from the musical, curiously also circa WW II, *Sound of Music*. Just as the Von Trapp family did, they wave as they go out the door.

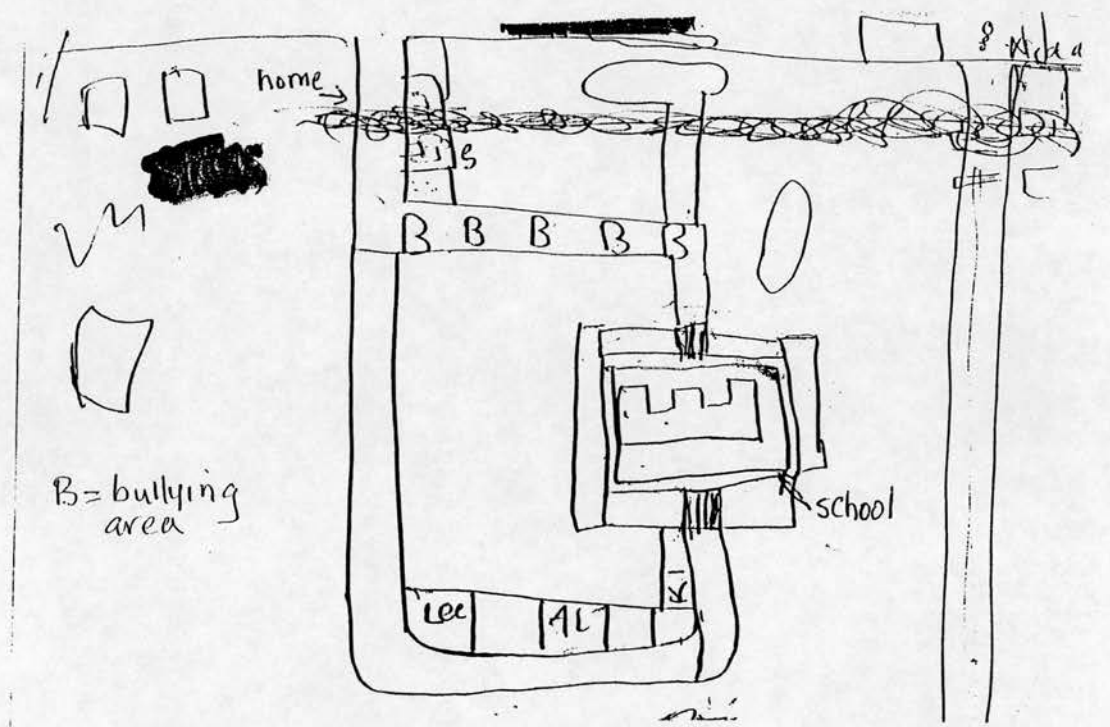
Later, back up in the classroom, Mr. Ruhl organises the class to give Ms. Board three hurrahs when she walks in the class. After this congratulatory moment, Ms. McHardy comes in and Jack has his dressing down. He is so mad a vein is sticking out at the side of his neck. To every punishment she indicates he will receive, shaming, excluding from activities, he gives a one word retort, "So" or a two-word, "who cares." His chin is buried in his chest, his defence mode, which doubles as an acceptable sign of contrition, as read by the adult. Ms. McHardy is standing over him shouting, "what are you saying? excuse me! how dare you be rude to me!" In this, her tactic is very similar to Mr. Ruhl's, surrounding the child with a wall of sound that isolates him from his peers. If she were hitting him, he would have a means of proving his toughness by not flinching. This verbal form of dressing down leaves him with inadequate tools to resist. His frustration is palpable. I believe she is in real danger of getting punched—but she has the sense to back away from him. Humiliating him in front of the whole class seems to be against Mr. Ruhl's stated intentions for dealing with Jack's special circumstances, clearly those concerns for his individual circumstances are over-ridden by more core corporate concerns Ms. McHardy continues to ask him how dare he, how dare he let the whole class down. He will not play football tomorrow. He says "so" trying to be tough. Her reply is to up the ante and say he will never play football for a team that has this school's name attached to it. I hear Ian moan, "Jack". Ms. McHardy uses this to emphasise how much he has let the school down. Without him they are in danger of not having enough players to suit out for Saturday's game. Again, the usually silent Ian, slips in a quiet suggestion, without permission to speak, that actually Ms. McHardy takes up to resolve the team roster situation. Jack, in fact, does not return to play for the team for the rest of the season.

In this speech Ms. McHardy has depicted children's loyalty to their identity within school as something Jack has violated, an allegation which he is not allowed to challenge, and for which it is difficult to imagine him finding words to do so. This tactic powerfully disrupts one of children's most powerful resources for resistance, that of loyalty amongst children to resist the school. Jack's subsequent actions suggest that in his own mind he again reconfigures loyalty claims so that the allegation of disloyalty can be directed at another student.

After the spelling test there are only a few more minutes before lunch, which will end the day. Mr. Ruhl is called away to settle a fight downstairs. He puts Tracey in charge of the class, she asks me to do the certificates for good behaviour. In the process of doing so I notice that Mr. Ruhl has been ticking absent-mindedly down the entire class list on the positive side of the board and has ticked Jack's name as well, so that he gets a certificate for good behaviour minutes after this dressing down. The absurd contradiction seems to be lost on everyone but me.

After lunch I negotiate with Jackie and Stephanie to walk both of them home, to placate a tussle that has developed over "possession" of my time. We head out the front after Stephanie's sister doesn't appear to walk with us. At break Stephanie had drawn me a map of the area, labelling where bullying most often happens. She is only allowed to take that shorter route out of the back of the school if her older sister is there to walk with her. Instead we take the safer front route.

Figure 8.2: Bullying Map



We pass Jack who is standing in his front yard beside a thin woman with shoulder length brown hair. In the yard I notice breadcrumbs thrown out under the window, and solvent cans scattered across the grass. A yellow one is thrown at my feet as we progress down the block. I turn and wave a friendly goodbye, "see you next week". A few yards later a tin lid with sharp edges skitters along past us. Stephanie says that's dangerous. I say yeah, keep walking. Mark, Stephanie's brother, turns around and starts shouting back, using local swear words. Jack yells back with the same. Stephanie turns around tells him to watch his language around her little brother. He yells. She turns and does something I don't see or hear, but it trips his fuse. He calls her a "fuckin bitch" and comes pelting down the street. We are at the corner by

now. In a tight fix I take a page right out of Mr. Ruhl's running narrative of expected behaviour: I turn, put myself between him and Stephanie and tell him he will go home now. I add he has had a bad day and tell him to shake it off. He lowers his head and looks out the top of his eyes at me for a moment, but doesn't hold it, wavers. I feel the heat has gone out of his intentions, so I turn Stephanie back on course and get her moving down the block. Jack is waiting as if for Stephanie to provoke him again. I keep a close eye on her and move to prevent her every time she starts to turn back towards him, realising by now its her hand signals that will trigger a fight, and that my responsibilities as an adult attached to the school are greater than the interests of the academy at this point. Her little brother is yelling insults back, and Jack returns them, but this does not seem to be key. Two boys are coming up the pavement. As we pass, Stephanie says confidently that that boy will stand up for her because they went together when she was in P1. At some point in school, Stephanie has said she wished I would come every day. The vague sense the children cluster around me for some potential protection that I may provide has suddenly materialised. The boys join Jack at the corner. Jack tells them his side of the story. Clearly there has been some serious breach of the established order by Stephanie as the boys join Jack in yelling. It is only in writing up the notes that I put the sequence together. Jack helped Stephanie be allowed to do the jump in the morning, and is repaid by her snitching to Mr. Ruhl in the line just before the performance. I don't overhear his narrative to the boys, but it's likely these are among its building blocks.

Stephanie says she'll get her cousin to batter him. He's ten but can batter a 14 year old. He's "hard" she keeps repeating. He stays in Brae Ridge (a rival council estate). She has her uncle's phone number, and he'll come over. She yells back that she'll get her cousin to beat the crap out of him. This in a deeper local accent than I have heard her use before. Further down, Mark makes gestures to Jack, very punchy, quick jerks, well-practised, meaning suck mine. Jackie and Stephanie argue which is which: if you're a girl you do it from your chest, not your pelvis. A key sign language exchange goes on between them here, as they compare gestures, each using quick deft motions with their hands and arms, they look from my perspective to be very well practised, fluent. Heretofore, either in club settings or at school, I have rarely caught a glimpse of this kind of communication. Ian and James make small under the table furtive motions, spin on this, or wanker. But the girls' gestures that I had seen up until now had only been in imitation of those seen on Top of the Pops dance routines.

Once we've put some thirty yards distance between us and the corner, I ask, "So those rules at school about bullying, do they mean anything?" Both respond to the effect, of course not, how can that even be a question!? Jackie heatedly begins to protest, her face going an angry red—I cannot expect them to follow the school rules, it is very unfair to expect that. She doesn't finish her sentence before Stephanie breaks in, "You have to be hard." "So is that what you aim for?" They both repeatedly assert, that, here in Braeview, that's what matters most.

Then, as we cross the street, Stephanie says "Jack's all right except when he gets really mad," and then implies that there is no dealing with him then and that this happens a lot. But she doesn't call him a bully, as if to distance him from the term I raise. Another time at the school I ask if a boy who I have seen be aggressive is a bully and am similarly told in a weary voice by another girl,

“no, just a pain in the ass.” The street response seems either side of the institution’s policy of labelling and dealing with the offender. This magnifies the dynamics of smaller confrontations I noticed in class, where stark threats would be uttered one moment, swiftly followed by acts of co-operation a few minutes later.

As Stephanie gets to her door, she says she and her brother sometimes take a nap in the afternoon to catch up. She shows me venetian blinds at the top floor and her neighbour’s venetian blinds as well. From the outside there is not much apparent distinction between her flat and theirs, both have the standard lace curtains. Stephanie had talked on the playground about neighbours keeping them up, pounding on door, yelling at each other. They don’t get sleep. They do it just for kicks, pounding on their door. Near Stephanie’s door Mark says something along the lines, he’ll kick the crap out of Jack so hard he won’t crap out of his bum, he’ll be crapin out of his mouth— his actual words are more poetic and hang together better than that. I ask where he learned that. Stephanie says nowhere; he just made it up. He does that. The last thing Stephanie does is whisper who it is who bullies her, names I do not recognise from school. Jack’s is not included among them. She seems very concerned I do not tell. Her brother shouts them out to Jackie. I ask Jackie why is Stephanie so concerned no one know? Jackie doesn’t say much. We talk about being hard in Brae Terrace. She starts talking about two families who think they are hard. I say that’s nine tenths of the battle. She says not so. I ask where these families live. She says one lives top of the other. I ask where the other lives, on the bottom of the first? She laughs seeing the joke. I laugh too and don’t push for information; it’s clear she is not supposed to tell.

This incident raises questions about what kinds of effects the socially engineered loyalty of the school has on the larger economy of trust in the neighbourhood at large. It also highlighted for me teachers’ lack of perception of violence or threat within their approach. In keeping with the city’s policy, they are committed to use minimal force and minimal restraint. Yet, the prohibition on using physical force has meant force has had to be reinvested in other forms. I wonder about the force invested in the structures of the school routines and how this may enact the structural violence educational and social theorists are at pains to point out (Corrigan 1979).

Their practice seems to conform to Moll’s claim that:

Working class children receive rote drill and practice. Instruction work that is mechanical and primarily limited to following the procedures. . . . It is significant that this reduction of the curriculum is not only in terms of content, but in terms of limited and constrained uses of literacy and mathematics, the tools for thinking. (1994: 387)

This view is echoed in the research of Tishman et al. (1995) into developing good thinking skills. They write, “traditional schooling tends to focus children’s attention exclusively on thinking products outside the self, on texts, facts and the “right

answers" and rarely provides learners with opportunities to reflect on their own inner thinking process" (1995: 66). They emphasise the importance of the classroom culture: "This cultural aspect of education is one of the things that make the experience of schooling so much greater than the sum of its parts" (1995: 1). They advocate a classroom culture that cultivates cognitive resourcefulness, independent thinking, and playfulness, with these dispositions:

- to be curious and questioning
- to think broadly, adventurously
- to reason clearly, and carefully
- to organise one's thinking
- to give thinking time.

which they assert lead to good thinking (1995: 21).

In Mr. Ruhl's classroom there is not much opportunity to organise one's thinking since that is already extensively done by Mr. Ruhl. The children are quite clear that their role is just to correctly fill in the blanks or compartments. What is permissible to think about or express is so vigilantly patrolled, the kinds of interests and attitudes dictated, so out of step with reality beyond the school walls, that a disposition to be curious is severely circumscribed⁶.

One could argue that the texts produced in Mr. Ruhl's class are much more coherent, well structured, that they meet many more of the criteria of writing competency than those cited in the middle class school. My concern is that children in Braeview have much less responsibility for creating that structure. Literacy researchers, such as Cambourne (1988), claim that traditional teaching practices have resulted in a large section of society that is alienated literate. Citing alarming percentages of adult non-participation in literate practices, Cambourne uses the term "the alienated literate" to refer to those who can read, but who avoid it. They have had ample experience

⁶ This analysis corresponds with that of Chouliaraki (1998) who draws on Edwards and Mercer's observation that classrooms with an emphasis on procedural knowledge that "rehearse" institutional routines lead to the possible result that "pupils disengage from any real exploration of subject matter and do not develop their own control over learning" (Edwards and Mercer 1987: 161).

following or conforming to the rules but not in creating or deciding the rules. Quoting Birnbaum and Emig on the ramifications of underdeveloped or unevenly developed literacy skills, Cambourne points out that power lies not so much in passively taking in what is in print, but in actively engaging in the production of what is printed:

A reading citizen stays a client, a consumer of culture; a writing citizen becomes its creator or destroyer. (1988: 14)

There are indications that reduced opportunities for critical and exploratory thinking influence the ways in which the children engage with the texts of popular culture, the images marketed at them. Whereas interaction at the other school with marketed toy genres, such as Pokemon, was characterised by stretching, adapting, or combining images to make up their own hybrids versions. The emphasis in play interaction of children from this school that I observed concentrated on tracing over a faithful copy of the images, engraining the brand. This situation lends itself to a distinction Coleridge made between catotropic imaginal processes, which mirror external reality, and metatropic imaginal processes which transpose and rearrange external reality. The difference is between reproduction and recreation. Following Aristotle, Coleridge sought to make the case that metatropic imagination was a more sophisticated, intelligent activity, transformative in nature, than other philosophers conceptualised it as being (Goldman 1998: 19-20). However these observations raise questions about what kind of imaginative activities happen in what kinds of contexts. Children's ability to play and imitate in transformative ways is not in question. However their interpretation that in certain settings, such as Mr Ruhl's classroom, this is not allowed or possible is of concern.

In contrast to their engagement with school narrative content or even popular culture, the one arena in which children, notably boys, did exhibit transformative play was in their interaction with the built environment: railings, walls, window ledges, pipes, seeing them as opportunities, putting them to uses, interacting with them, as if they were quite different than that which adult authorities' assumed. This reinforces the sense that children had internalised different ideas about what they could exercise their imaginations about and what they couldn't or shouldn't.

It is not that Mr. Ruhl is not concerned to promote good thinking skills or unaware that it would be better if children in his class took more initiative. Yet, it seems they have had to sacrifice these in order to contain the predominantly male members of the class who could have a disruptive effect. There is the argument these

behaviourist tactics are forced upon them by the situation. What I am detailing here are fairly standard tactics for dealing with behavioural problems in special schools where it is understood that, for a variety of reasons, children have a diminished capacity to take responsibility for themselves. The degree to which this is a gendered problem is again illustrated by a rupture in the daily routine.

ON THE PLAYGROUND

It is a bright day and windy. The girls with whom I usually walk slowly around the grounds with chatting are on playground buddy duty. I watch them supervise younger children's use of play equipment. They start jump roping and I find myself drawn in. Once I am holding one end of the rope the activity remembers itself through my limbs. A habit recalls itself without my thinking, I tap the rope against the jumper's ankles at the pace I will swing it over her head three times to accustom her to the rhythm. I ask them if they know Cinderella. Soon Joan offers to do Teddy Bear. Soon other upper primary girls not assigned to play with the young ones are joining in, too. The playground supervisors have started another group of little ones singing Farmer in the Dell. There is a cosy sense of co-operation and relaxed ease, as if everyone is letting down their guard a little. But this concentration of female activity seems quickly to come at a price. "Fight!!" is the yell that comes from around the corner of the building before its messenger itself bodily appears. Stephanie calls my name. I hesitate, not wanting to fuel the sense of drama sweeping the ground. I expect that the fight will be settled by the time I make it at a brisk walk around the building, but a P5 boy is still walloping a smaller boy despite the playground supervisor's attempt to catch his arm as I round the corner. He is swinging too fast for her to get a grip. Finally she does. The bell rings for lines. She drags him up to the stairs. He is still swinging, and spitting furiously at her now. He seems unable to hear any of her attempts at calming him by calling him by name, telling him she knows he can act better, that he really doesn't want to get himself in trouble. He is hissing mad, ripping through a string of threats at her. His flailing arms make contact with a garbage lid and send it flying. She still only has a grip of one arm. He is pulling away from her over the railing. She tries to limit his movements by pushing him towards the wall of the school with her backside. This looks like an accident seconds from happening, so reluctantly I step forward and offer to help. She declines whispering quickly to me. "No, we are only allowed to hold them by one hand!" In another second Mr. Ruhl's head appears through a crack in the door. He takes a hold of the boy, smiles and disappears inside the school. I can see the tension go out of the child as he enters the building. Soon Mr. Ruhl's voice can be heard booming through the interior of the building. I only then turn to look at the children. I am struck by how the faces have hardened in contrast to the smiles and shy grins of pleasure of a few moments ago. No one is standing in lines; they are scattered, the girls in close clumps of twos and threes the boys more individually. Lines are dutifully formed. Upstairs, as the class files in, Mr. Ruhl again grins, not in a nasty way as if he enjoys the situation, but as if to say, "See what we are up against?"

It occurs to me that Mr. Ruhl's strict routine is not entirely for the benefit of his class. Although it is Ms. McHardy who is sent for when someone is ticked out, as

part of the routine handling of misbehaviour, when there is a crisis, most often in the form of a fight, it is Mr. Ruhl who is sent for. It seems he represents the ultimate sanction of the school, and, as such, there cannot be one missing chink in his armour, not one time when his control appears to slip. This puts him in a very different role from the other teachers with whom I worked.⁷

CONSEQUENCES AND THEIR ALTERNATIVES

The contrast with the other school in which I did fieldwork is illustrated by the difference highlighted at the Christmas Parties at each school. The degree to which both schools let children be themselves or take responsibility for setting limits and expressing identity are characterised by the Christmas parties held at each school. At Braeview children were marched in, in a similar fashion to the gymnastic parade, into the same gym space. Although the wide variety of fashion sense displays a widening range of maturity across the upper primary, their behaviour still must conform to the set rules of a children's party. They are instructed to take a seat. The events are on posters either side of stage. Mr. Ruhl warns everyone to begin with that they have eleven items to get through, so they had better behave and pay attention. The last is FOOD in capitals. Periodically they are reminded that they have more to do and need to stay on schedule. The only movement permitted is that of choreographed country dancing, which they have been practising for weeks. Their dutiful compliance going through the motions of these dance steps out of the past is a metaphor for much of their overall school routine in which they conform to an almost Victorian image of the child imposed upon them by the structure of the school. At one point some boys begin to chase each other playfully and Mr Ruhl calls out harshly, "I think some boys misunderstood the meaning of the word walk! I didn't expect this behaviour at a Christmas Party!" (Field Journal 4: 54)/(Field Document Dec. 14)

In contrast, at the Forest Hill school, loud pop music mingles with the shouts and laughter of children swirling in friendship groups around the hall while teachers look on in mild amusement. Some are playing tag, others mimicking pop music. Strands

⁷ Other teachers within the school could afford to have take a softer line. This made them extremely popular with some girls, yet often meant their classes were more disrupted. As Jackie comments one day as I am left in charge of them as they change into their gym kit. "If teacher's don't give you a row, we don't respect them, they're soft."

of children shift, coalesce, break apart. Mr. Ruhl's admonishment would not have been heard above the din.

Why is the din permitted, even celebrated in the one school and beyond imagining in the other? It cannot be attributed just to socio-economic conditions, differences in training or background in special education, or even personality. Each school has a different story comprised of all these factors and others. Ten years ago the story line of each school was much more similar, but each school has "turned itself around" and, in doing so, turned towards different cultural norms⁸.

I want now to consider what alternative perspectives on the school culture there might be from other professionals working in the area either in schools or support projects, and, most importantly, children's perspectives on the differences between the school's culture and that of the support projects with which they are also familiar. Working in Braeview for two years has been an artist in residence providing one or two week sessions with a number of classes in this school as well as the other schools in the area.

Excerpts from an interview with him give a feel for the differences in his overall approach. Contrary to the role defined in the school motto, children are more than learners, they are even experts:

Kids don't perceive story as learning, but I try to include learning. The key is to get into what they are expert in. Children are experts on giants and witches; they have to deal with them every day. To them adults are giants and teachers have a magic knowledge just as witches do. Kids are fascinated by fairies, the fascination of a small person with power. I go with their energy. They are interested in the journey, not so much the ending. Stories come to a rest, not a stop. It's not my job to close but to open. My approach is, "I'm Ian, can you help me, do me a favour?" I want them to see how I process the story, not set myself apart. I use my pleasure, my fun. So often teachers believe, "if I haven't taught them it, they don't know it." Working with stories can demonstrate the opposite. (from Interview, tape 16)

In reviewing this segment of reported speech with the artist in residence, he wanted to make clear that he did not see himself as an educationalist. Nor did he want to set himself in opposition to what teachers were doing. He characterised what he did as giving everyone a break, so that, at the least, teachers could get some marking done. Yet, Ms. McHardy and Mr. Ruhl expressed criticism of processes with more of

⁸ As Tett notes, "differing values and purposes that underpin parent-school relations give rise to very different outcomes" (2001: 193).

an emphasis on creativity than structure and of "child-centred" approaches. Their clearest criticism was of what they identified as a "social work" approach. Ms. McHardy described how a social work emphasis on troubled individuals disrupts the dynamics of the class as a whole, encouraging others in the class to act out in order to get similar attention. Mr. Ruhl's criticisms as well reflected a sense that those with a different approach do not have a full appreciation of the context or the place of children. Mr. Ruhl, "I'm not saying our discipline is better. They have allowed children to speak to them in that way in order to get to underlying causes, let things slide. We have had a different approach, we are at a different place," (Field Journal 2: 42). Mr. Ruhl again draws on the trope of place in a more tempered criticism of the art worker, saying, "He doesn't know where they are at."

Both interpretations again emphasise responsibilities to the class as a collective over focusing on individual needs, which they characterise as being in conflict. I am left wondering to what degree Moll's observation that teachers can become bound within the normality created in their own classroom and can thereby come to see that that system and delivery as "natural" (1994: 389-390) is pertinent here. Tett (2001) has observed that educators working outside the structure of school and those working within it can have decidedly different perspectives on what creates this conflict and whose needs should be held paramount.

By contrast to his appraisal of the artist's work with the class, Mr. Ruhl expresses dissatisfaction with the "spoon feeding" he himself does for the class and expressed the intent to challenge them to be more creative and independent in his next writing project with them. This coincided with my departure from the field so I cannot report on the outcome. I taped one of the first lessons, and it portrays both himself and the class strictly adhering to their roles in the formulaic exchanges that I had observed so often up to that point.

It is important here to refer back to the theoretical underpinning of the study. In defining the process of interpretation the latter stages of emic/etic comparison are crucial. What has to be said is that of all the settings I worked in, I was least able to take on board Mr. Ruhl's perspective. There is the least "fusion of horizons" in Gadamer's terms, and the greatest shadow of unportrayed experience as a result. Ironically, the dialogic dynamics of reading may mean that the absence in this text will draw the reader to fill that in for themselves, so that they find themselves taking Mr. Ruhl's part and identifying with him, filling that gap or role with their

own imagination, particularly if they have had classroom teaching experience from which to draw.

The conclusion to be drawn is not a criticism of Mr. Ruhl's teaching or even a prescription for how it should change. The absences simply do not allow for that. What I can say is that the metaphor of production and reproduction of strongly defined roles predominates in this class, to the exclusion of other possibilities and more dialogic interaction. For that to change, a range of forces impacting on the context would have to be addressed in concert and not by a teacher with a magic wand.

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES

In March, when I ask some of the girls about the class sessions that this artist in residence had done with them, they clearly remember the story line, not just the theme of the project. They recount, not just the project from the beginning of this school year, but the project they did the year before as well, and they evaluate both very positively:

Jill: He tells you good stories and that
And makes
And he's good
Because
Ye dinnae have to like
Draw something borin
Or write something borin
He always comes up with good ideas.

It is interesting that they attribute good ideas to him, when in fact his practice, which I observed to be consistent with his intentions, actively sought to build on their own ideas.

Children also had a positive evaluation of the area's out-of-school play scheme, one girl suggesting it as an alternative to school. When the co-ordinator of the scheme introduced me to the project she did so by contrasting it to the school culture: "Basically (the aim is) just to have fun and not be yelled at like they are at school, and maybe at home," (Field Journal 3: 41)⁹. The girls from the class take the

⁹ It is important to note that neither of these professionals is under the pressure to produce exam and test results that teachers increasingly are.

opportunity of the holiday club to question me about my work, possibly because it strikes them as strange that someone from the school is also at this scheme, which for them is associated with a different set of adults and different adult-child relationships.¹⁰ Chrissy asks me what I'm doing. I say I'm writing a book. She asks is it a book with math answers, which to me seems to characterise the kind of authority and knowledge Mr. Ruhl exemplifies. I respond, no, it's a book about why children go to school, and should school be different, what does she think? Her response is, no, children shouldn't go to school. I ask what would they do instead. She responds, "come here", meaning the club, (Field Journal 3:. 48).

A more direct vision of an alternative to the school regime than they are accustomed to, is actually generated by an activity inside the school. Late in the winter term, Mr. Ruhl gives the class a writing assignment from a new language arts curriculum that the school is considering. As with the first draft of the bullying stories, Mr. Ruhl indicates he wishes to disassociate himself from these texts. When I photocopy them, he hasn't actually had a chance to look at them. The assignment is to write a page about what they would do if they were head teacher for a day. Chrissy's response alludes directly to the discipline practice examined in this chapter:

If I were Head Teacher for the day I would let the children play football in the corridors, eat sweets and crisps in class. I would never never never never shout at the children. Every day in my office I would listen to Scub 7, Will Smith, Steps and Travis, Five West life. In all my spare time I like to sew and read and go to the cinema and see all the new releases. All the children in the school would know the pass number for the front door and have a key as well. That would be my day of being the headteacher for the day. Goodbye (Chrissy).

It is interesting that she adds lifestyle details of the Head Teacher's out of school life, in contrast with the others in the class who did not. It is clear that a lot of unsanctioned borrowing goes on within the class. Many compositions refer to football in the corridors, food fights, water fights and other forms of forbidden pleasures. Many also list the pop music that would be allowed in the school. Chrissy's composition is singular in its creation of a life outside the school for the teacher. Another unique feature is her decision that every child will have the pass number for the front door, essentially allowing them free access, empowering them and equalising their power status with adults in quite practical, structural terms. In contrast, other compositions revel in carnivalesque contradictions and

¹⁰ The school runs an after school homework club, but it is a continuation of the school culture, not a departure from it.

impossibilities in which everyone gets permission to do what they (really) want, be happy and simultaneously at each other's mercy:

I am Headteacher for a day. I am very strict. I am listening to my stereo in my office! Allow pupils to skip school and be cheeky and play football in corridors. Teachers can swear at the children and hit the children with the spikey belt on the bum. Now I am in the dining hall and the pupils are allowed to have a party and they are allowed to have a food fight and they are allowed to batter the dinner ladies. I feel marvellous and I feel in control and fantastic. (Joan)

In none of the compositions do any children depict themselves teaching, all of them centre around activities of control or inversion of power. All of them change the terms of expression, invite in the popular and the embodied expressions of identity. These compositions suggest, as the studies of Shuman (1987), Davies (1993), and Mac an Ghail (1994) also conclude, that children's primary experience of school is not of a place of learning but of negotiating or navigating through the often turbulent dynamics of social power and control.

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES

And the parents-- what choices are they making? What alternatives would they prefer?

It is not as if the parents object to the school or its culture. In four different interviews with parents they state the school is a good school. It is difficult to establish the rapport and the common vocabulary that would give me some insight into just exactly what they see it as good for. However, there is some ambivalence expressed. When I ask one mother if she goes up to the coffee mornings or adult courses offered at the school, she replies in a harder tone, "I've no use to go up there." This coded response conveys why the uptake of such opportunities was scant. The "there" of this remark is weighed down with a heavy load of implied connotations. Whatever they are, I cannot guess at, but the sense is the connotations are not "good". What the school is "good" for is something she has had enough of, not something she wants more of. Bernstein would term this reply restricted; condensed seems more pertinent. Another time, as I explain I have to leave to make a scheduled appointment with Mr. Ruhl, this same mother laughs and says, "Is he keeping you in line?" In response to my quizzical smile she adds, "Don't worry, he keeps us all in line," (Field Journal 1: 65). Both incidents indicate an underlying unease with being kept in line or the continual surveillance or regulation that the

school exerts in their lives. This suggests that parents have settled for a school that reproduces the status quo, gives their children the bare minimum in knowledge and a course in discipline which they will need if they are to accustom or inure themselves to the routines of menial, service labour¹¹. A sense of an intrinsic value, which is key to an understanding of education as liberation or self-fulfilment, is absent. Education is spoken of in extrinsic terms, and so is the gamble or wager the mum puts to her reluctant child at the school door. If you don't go, you won't get a chance. Which is not to say if you do go, your chance will prove successful. This encapsulation of the educational encounter resonates uncannily with the synopsis provided by Daniel in Jamaica, "Miss if yu cyan read, yu cyan go nowhere in life." It has the same dubious ring to it; there's no guarantee that if you do know how to read you will go somewhere in life.

CONCLUSION

The attitudes expressed in these remarks relate again to the concerns raised by Cambourne (1988). He argues that alienated literacy is largely due to the connotations reading has, which are largely the product of negative, alienating school experiences, in which a gulf between real life issues and school norms fail to convince learners that reading should be of central importance to their identity. The failure to convince is articulated by Ms. McHardy herself:

Ms. McHardy: I was talking to the P7 class today
about hopes and fears of going to the local high school
and none of them were really about
gettin' an education
none of their hopes were about
getting a good education
passin their exams
and getting a good job at the end of it
and I was the one who had to bring up
you know
what do you expect at the end of your time at (local high school)
do you expect
future exam results
but that seemed to be
way down the bottom of the list
I don't think they thought that far

¹¹ MacLeod observes, "many working class parents know from their own job experiences that submission to authority is an important value for success in the workplace and expect the school to inculcate this value" (1987: 12).

I means some of them are wantin to get married an' have babies . . . (Tape 31)

At issue here is a central question Gee asks. Gee sees the school setting as having a distinct social language. Acquiring this social language entails at least a partial loss or relinquishment of the child's primary social language of home. This loss is greater when there are greater differences between the social language of home and school, and most difficult when the languages and the predominant messages and rules that shape home and school are experienced as being in downright opposition to each other:

The crucial question, then, is this: *Why would anyone—most especially a child in school—accept this loss?* My view is that people will accept this loss only if they see the gain as a gain. . . People can only see a new social language as a gain if they recognize and understand the sorts of socially-situated identities and activities that recruit the social language; if they value them or at least, understand why they are valued; and if they believe they (will) have real access to them or, at least (will) have access to meaningful versions of them. (Gee, in print: 4)

Throughout this chapter, at several points the social languages of community and school were shown to be in opposition to each other. Yet, so long-standing are they, so mundane or engrained are these oppositions, they are taken for granted as unremarkable.

I remain unconvinced that many children in Mr. Ruhl's class believe that the school norms and the social language in which it is conducted is something they can appropriate into their identity, or is something that they can use to be successful in terms that are meaningful to them, though there are exceptions like Tracey. Ultimately, it is not up to me to answer that question, but Mr. Ruhl, and I imagine it is a question to which he gives his concern and attention on a regular basis. When various more open-ended, dialogic alternatives to Mr. Ruhl's practice were raised, what I remember best about his response was his silence and a kind of look that flickered across his face as his mouth set into a firm but patient smile, as if he did not wish to argue with whoever was raising the point. Only experience would teach them, as it had him.

It is tempting to over-interpret the silences and the absences that I observed. However, the brief exchanges I witnessed when the silence was broken, when children either turned to other more expressive roles, or even more rarely provided a commentary on their school silence, demonstrated that there is much more going on, hinting at complex dynamics that I have as yet just glimpsed. However, like the

sixth grade class of boys in Jamaica, there is very little evidence for a mediating bridge of intermediate language practices between their formal classroom duties, and their preferred means of expression.

Faced with the lack of a positive incentive that will convince her daughter to enter the lifeworld of the school, the mother, with whose dilemma this chapter began, turns from holding out to her daughter the promises of education to threatening her street credibility. Unfortunately, the starkness of the choice seems all too characteristic of the interface between school and home in this community.

"I'll really scalp your arse and you'll be greetin' in front of every one of them."

CHAPTER NINE

CHOICES AND VOICES

We are creating solutions to our problems with makeshift equipment, spare parts and assemblage. But like Mad Max we have something that runs. We know that we have few tools and little by way of appropriate parts and so we become inventors, in the best sense of the word, inventing ways of repairing, recycling used fabric. . .

We know we are not working with standard issue parts and we have come to suspect that there are no longer any such parts made.

(Lincoln and Denzin 1998: 425-426)

In a fractured age, when cynicism is god, here is a possible heresy: we live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly—in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness. If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives.

(Okri 1996: 46)

CHILDREN'S SCHOOL CHOICES

In conclusion, it is fitting to open up the question with which the last chapter ended for examination in light of the study as a whole. The question Gee asks, why should anyone be willing to lose the known of their lifeworld in exchange for the kinds of knowledge that school offers? What has become apparent in this study is that this is not a matter of one choice but of many nested on-going choices, a polyphony of choices. Children's narrating is complex and evidences an engagement with the complexity around them. Children chose to adopt different elements of school discourse to varying degrees in different situations. The shape of their individual stories and of the overall group discourse formed from these stories also varied, for a number of reasons, chief among them being their sense of how either open or closed the classroom culture was to inclusion of their ideas and identities. In Bakhtin's words, their choices were shaped by how much scope for dialogic interaction they determined there actually was for their utterances. What might

improve the range or scope of choices children feel enabled to make, and improve the interpretive resources that they draw on to make choices?

WHOSE CHOICE?

At this point studies often reach for a strong conclusion: what is needed is a change of policy, implementation of a different teacher training curriculum, or pedagogical framework. As worthwhile as any of these may be, this cannot be the conclusion of this study. The conclusion is both larger and smaller than these, includes a consideration of all of them, and, yet, can be encapsulated in none of them. As the discourse analysis of Chouliaraki (1999), Alexander (2000), and Edwards and Mercer (1987) before have pointed out, all of these larger systemic approaches to change, depending upon the way they are delivered, can actually reinforce the dynamics they are intended to change. As Delpit (1999) points out, and Chouliaraki's (1999) work confirms, many "progressive" teachers seeking to be "child centred", employ indirect means to level the interpersonal power imbalance, but don't actually bring out into discussion for a comparison of interpretations the real criteria underlying the power imbalance. Instead they can reinforce secretarial procedural routines at the expense of more liberatory, exploratory learning. This study, instead of putting the onus on the teacher or the school, has asked, what do students do to make a space for themselves, to use both school resources and wider community resources to interpret their world, communicate with each other, and express their identity?

CHOOSING STORY FORMS AT SCHOOL

To review briefly, in the middle class Scottish school, Forest Hill, both girls and boys used topic centred stories within a class debate forum. These stories were much more tightly structured than those they had produced as written assignments, which lacked clear agency and, particularly in the case of the girls' stories, meandered. Further into the year a distinction between how stories were used to perform or entertain divided along gender lines. Boys' versions of "story-in-the-round" activities employed topic centred techniques inside a turn, but between turns, topic centred-ness was dispensed with. The criteria was not topic centred but performance centred in which each individual asserted a common yet tacitly agreed criteria for comic performance. In contrast, the girls' individual topic centred stories

contributed to an overall topic centred continuous story line. Both boys and girls cooperated in their joint story telling sessions; it is just that the assumptions that made that cooperation possible and the forms that cooperation took differed significantly. Throughout storytelling activities both boys and girls experimented with introducing group members or themselves into the story as characters and thereby the potential for indirect commentary and role reversal that this tactic facilitated.

The boys from the lower stream sixth year class at Caledonia Heights in Jamaica introduced me to an image based structure of moving between story fragments that borrowed from their aural and visual literary expertise. Their practice of filling in details around main speakers' sentences, sometimes completing sentences for the main speaker gave rise to complex multi-perspective renderings of the stories they portrayed. The boys also showed a strong ability to argue through story, privileging embodied ways of knowing. Rather than topic associative, the better descriptor of the overall structure of their performance, I suggest, is topic fractal, to denote the blend of coherence from a wide disparate array of source material, that creates, like complexity, innovation at the interface between chaos and order.

Topic fractal is a term applicable, as well, to the shape of some of the stories told in the upper stream group at Caledonia Heights, predominantly made up of girls. In debate they told several topic centred stories, but, rather than each only re-emphasising the initial position, or dividing into two opposing stances, as characterised debating use of story at Forest Hill, the individual topic centred stories spread out around the central topic, examining various inversions of the original proposition. The girls also used polyphonic strategies to turn stories into performances. These performances, unlike those of their male counterparts, gravitated more towards a topic centred form. The girls were able to make the transition from spoken topic centred narratives to written topic centred narratives, and portrayed a firmer understanding of the standard use of illustration in relation to written texts.

In contrast to the diversity of narrative forms that emerged at Forest Hill and Caledonia Heights, children in the Scottish working class school, Braeview, in much more restricted classroom activities, conformed to topic centred stories. However, within those stories oral exchanges predominate. In a few instances children used carnival humour to invert normal power relations. Submerged communication took

the form of sign language below the table in class and graffiti-like doodling on notebooks, and expanded to a more embodied interaction with the built environment outside the school confines. At the close of the research period children at Forest Hill, though a year younger, exhibited a much more sophisticated coordination of internal thought and plot sequencing than the children at Braeview did. In neither school was this a goal stressed by the teachers, but, I suggest, was a result of the more open dialogical opportunities for exploring movement across forms of communication at Forest Hill.

Comparison between Forest Hill and Caledonia Heights is problematic. There are different cultural norms, practices and examples which children draw upon. The encouragement to explore ideas orally in the Jamaican context took a different direction, less towards personal introspection and more towards public debate. In Jamaica there was a more prevalent, ingrained, adept use of story. In a number of ways, there was school and community encouragement for children to see themselves as legitimate, accomplished producers of culture in the Jamaican context, whereas in the northern settings, for a host of reasons, largely to do with how they are positioned as socio-economic consumers of culture, this encouragement was subdued or constrained. Yet, in Jamaica written curriculum did not draw upon oral and physical performance skills, rather curriculum exchanges required a lack of sophistication, and a blanket acceptance of received texts regardless of relevance or meaning. The cultural expertise was not drawn upon to interpret the curriculum content. As glaring a contradiction as this seemed, it was so embedded within a history of accommodating inconsistencies as to be unremarkable. In contrast to the creative use of language continually being reinvented to pass commentary on current events outside the school, language in school was predominantly conveyed as a limiting condition, to cite Bohlman's example (1991), used not much differently than as a foreigner consults a phrase book.

A distinction needs to be drawn between the two classrooms at Caledonia Heights. Mr. Lewis drew on local, salient cultural practices and values to signal subtly to students that they could and should re-examine and contextualise information. Mr. Noble's attempt to open up class discussion by recourse to progressive pedagogical techniques that nevertheless maintained and perhaps reinforced language barriers, met with less success. However, both Mr. Noble and Mr. Lewis opened up possibilities for children in their classes to interpret and make decisions about their

learning identity and use of education to a greater degree than Mr. Ruhl at Braeview did.

APPARENT SIMILARITIES, HIDDEN DIFFERENCES

As the study progressed, increasingly I had the sense that stories are not at all the same thing for each child in the class, that how stories grow and become something in each child's mind is really quite different. What is labelled as belonging to the same category, story, because of similarities in the end product is actually the result of very different processes. It is as if some children's constructions are like the painted canvas of a house. Some have painstakingly plastered brick to brick. Some have taken tin and nailed over the frame of a truck a house-like structure, but any moment now they are going to jump behind the wheel, and race off with the supposed house. Some have spent more time configuring the wiring in the house, which only has a frame scaffold. Others have concentrated on the weapons; it may look like a house, but it is really a tank. Some have created a holograph of a house that will blow away in the wind in the next second. Some have taken a photograph of the house--how can one call all these different constructions the same thing? They may look like they belong in the same category, but the minute one pokes a finger in them, one has a very different experience. The minute one asks the question, 'what use is this house?' one gets very different answers.

CHANGING COMPETENCIES

Much has been written about what different forms of communication can mean or accomplish. The differences between "oral" and "literate" cultures have been thoroughly contested and deconstructed (Goody 1969; Serpell 1993; Gee, 1994; Street 2001). I would argue that a third component, that of the increasing importance of reading and organising visual images needs to also be taken into consideration so that all three forms can complement each other in the learning environment. Though the forms of popular culture were different in the different settings, video imaging was central to all of them. Grossberg's (1993) point that pop culture has been usurped by game culture holds true in all three settings in that the predominant form is no longer that of a linear narrative or song lyric but of multiple, and to varying degrees, interchangeable potential scenarios or strategy fragments. Children are becoming much more adept at playing and thinking in the latter mode.

Not surprisingly at the same time technology has made the transition from linear sequential storing of information to the more compressed and compact configuring of images or information made up of component clusters or bit maps. Children's narrative activities demonstrate that children are not only social agents but also cultural producers. The boundaries between consuming, recycling and producing culture are very permeable and fluid, and take on different meanings in the differing contexts. The impediments or constraints that children overcome, as well as the various forms of encouragement or inspiration they receive from various forms of adult culture, all shape their own cultural creations. The explosion of visual media across information technologies means that school literacy is not the same window on the world that it could once claim to be (Broadfoot 2000). What children are already competent at when they come to school, what competencies they can gain at school and how the interface between these competencies is to be negotiated is changing (New London Group 1996). The interface as it exists is not understood as well as it should be, and is only growing more complex.

Children's varying use of topic centred narrative illustrates this point. In contrast to Michael's (1986) study, children's use of topic centred narratives, in all settings and across cultural distinctions, did not seem to be something they used in response to school oriented tasks or a skill that they had become familiar with through schooling practices. Rather, it became most evident when they stepped outside normative school practices to assert their points of view in debate, and when they seemed to draw on wider community rhetorical skills.

Some of the most important choices that students made are very much as Bakhtin portrays them. They chose to borrow or to spin utterances in partial adoption or refusal of what is being offered. As Tucker (1999: 14) states they resort to strategies of partial resistance and cooperation common across the Third World.

CHOICES IN THE GLOBALISATION CONTEXT

Is this the most effective response to the powerful forces of globalisation, which many critiques depict as seriously draining resources, democratic, economic and cultural from those already disadvantaged? What responsibilities do educators have, located as they are at the gateway between structures and its carnival

subversion (Gee 1994)? Is not the ethical response to try to muster some structured response to globalisation's structured impositions (Louisy 2001)¹? Before answering these questions, it is worth pausing to consider carnival's contemporary reincarnation. Much of what Tricia Rose writes about hip hop is applicable to Dance Hall, and even the cultural youth practices of postindustrial Scotland.

These emerging hip hop identities affirm the specificity and local character of cultural forms as well as the larger stylistic forces that define hip hop and Afro-diasporic cultures. Developing a style nobody can deal with—a style that cannot be easily understood or erased, a style that has the reflexivity to create counter dominant narratives against a mobile and shifting enemy—may be one of the most effective ways to fortify communities of resistance and simultaneously reserve the right to communal pleasure. With few economic assets and abundant cultural and aesthetic resources, Afro-diasporic youth have designated the street as the arena for competition and style as the prestige-awarding event. In the postindustrial urban context of dwindling low-income housing, a trickle of meaningless jobs for young people, mounting police brutality and increasingly demonic depictions of young inner-city residents, hip hop style is black urban renewal. (Rose 1994: 84-85)

Are youth cultural forms also the most viable forms of community development in post industrial Scotland and the post development Caribbean? An educator's response to these questions, drawing on Bakhtinian resources, can be to say, the choice is not either or. Whatever the structural strategy taken it should include a sensitivity to dialogic dimensions of discourse and an appreciation of carnival dynamics, a careful reading of carnival and a willingness to explore how carnival and educational reform might work in concert with each other, neither subsuming the other, but each with a healthy respect for each other that can only arise out of dialogue. Bakhtin himself knew what it was to be pitted against repressive forces far more powerful than he was, and his response? It was to write in celebration of carnival, of the capacity of the individual to nevertheless invert those forces in concert with, in performative dialogue with, those that make up his community, and then to go teach high school for over twenty years in a small town in an eastern province of the Soviet Union.

¹ Louisy comments, "The fears that the tentacles of cultural globalisation will entrap the soul of the Caribbean people, especially the young, and make of them a new flood of cultural refugees seem well founded, unless the region makes a concerted effort to locate its culture, and its contributions as differentiated elements in the globalized environment" (2001: 433).

INCORPORATING COMPLEXITY INTO CHOICES

This paradoxical, Bakhtinian response to one of globalisation's dilemmas enables the incorporation of a complexity view of education and the processes of educational change. As scientific understanding of mind rewrites the basic tenets of child development into a much more complex version, and as media resources offer to children a much more complex range of aural, print and visual means of communication, Bakhtin's complex understanding of dialogic dynamics is only going to become more relevant. The challenge becomes not to introduce change but to see what form change is already taking, its terms, conditions, the strengths that propel it, and to envision one's plan of action as an ongoing interactive dialogue with the complex dynamics already at play. The lessons of complexity reinforce the note of caution sounded in recent Comparative Education special issues (Crossley and Jarvis 2000, 2001) on globalisation that re-emphasise the importance of context and argue against the wholesale importation of educational policies deemed to be competitively advantageous. As Nederveen Pieterse comments, "where non-linear dynamics prevail, the counsel for policy is 'gentle action'" (1999: 78)².

Business and management have embraced the language of complexity, not without generalising and misconstruing some of the important dynamics of its intricacies³. The tropes and images of emergence are regularly deployed in the marketing campaigns of globalisation's biggest players, software companies, insurance and finance conglomerates. The concept of emergence plays an important role in the arguments which sell Post-Fordist or fast capitalism economic models, as Gee, Hull and Lankshear (1996) usefully point out. Gee, Hull and Lankshear also point out that the economic discourse built around emergence does not live up to its claims, particularly for those entering the fast capitalism arena at a disadvantage. The problem is that emergence is selectively glossed in this discourse, and complexity's

2 This view also resonates with that which Broadfoot, quoting Stenhouse, suggests--one that does not "strain after predictive power" but seeks to "illuminate the particular" and to draw on "insight rather than law" as a basis for understanding (2000: 361).

3 O'Sullivan cautions that, even with scientific disciplines, the understanding of complexity is not widespread, and that there are differing interpretations of complexity. He distinguishes between technocentric applications of connectionism within cognitive science and bio-centric ones, interpreting the technocentric one as reinforcing conventional ideas about mind and education that actually inhibit transformations necessary for a positive response to current challenges (1999: 55).

other lessons conveniently ignored⁴. Emergence is the capacity for some systems to build order out of disorder in a seemingly disordered process. However, there are also systems that resist disorder. When threatened with dissipative factors they reorganise themselves, evidencing a remarked resiliency towards change. It is important to keep both eventualities in mind, as well as others, when drawing analogies to society⁵.

If strange attractors do define a characteristic shape beyond which chaotic functions do not stray, if the autopoiesis at work in complex systems means that a system, when subjected to interference, will reorganise its basic structure in a more complex robust state, and, if these processes recur on a societal as well as a biological level, does this mean that the IMF domination of the post-colonial world is only a more robust, complex, insidious version of its more overt and simplistic predecessor, coloniality, which has as its more brutal precursor the imperial slave trade? This does not bode well for the future, and leads one to speculate in what more complex and robust form domination can manifest itself than structural adjustment, should that be successfully challenged.

Yet, the strange attractor of coloniality, if there is one, is not the only process of autopoiesis at work, there is another one which also pushed to a state far from equilibrium also transforms itself:

4 Nederveen Pieterse, in advocating a critical holism approach to understanding globalisation that incorporates complexity contrasts cooperative globalisation with competitive globalisation and points out that short cut holism, a holism that ignores or underrates inequality and difference falls short as a remedy (1997: 81).

5 As with all great breakthroughs in science, the incorporation into science of the ideas of chaos, complexity, emergence and complex adaptive systems bring with it increased power to understand and manipulate the world. As with all other major scientific breakthroughs, both good news and bad news are inherent in the new conceptual advances. And, as with all other scientific breakthroughs, whether the new knowledge is considered a heavenly blessing or an evil incarnate depends entirely on the wisdom and the motivations of those who wield it. (Eve 1997: 280)

For all the while, in African cultures, there are those who will not see themselves as Other. Despite the overwhelming reality of economic decline; despite unimaginable poverty; despite wars, malnutrition, disease and political instability, African cultural productivity grows apace: popular literatures, oral narrative and poetry, dance, drama, music and visual art all thrive. The contemporary cultural production of many African societies—and the many traditions whose evidences so vigorously remain ... is an antidote to the dark vision of the postcolonial novelist. (Appiah quoted in Barber, 1997:1)

Barber's commentary on the cultural complexity Appiah describes portrays a sensitivity to the possibility of autopoiesis which, though belated, is itself emerging in the study of post colonial culture:

These genres are not repositories of some archaic "authenticity": on the contrary they make use of all available contemporary materials to speak of contemporary struggles. But they are not mere products of "culture contact", either, speaking about—and to the West that has "corrupted" them. They are the work of local cultural producers speaking to local audiences about pressing concerns, experiences and struggles that they share. All these productions, then, undermine the binary paradigm of 'African culture'. (Barber 1997: 2)

The new shapes that chaos and complexity offer up to language return us to tradition with a perspective attentive to new resonances. The wisdom carried in other non-reducible structures, those carried in narrative, the shapes of Anansi and Brer Rabbit, have much more in common with fractals than they did with triangles. Complexity can be seen as scientific confirmation of what many practitioners already intuit. Research begins to suggest that intuition, traditions and practices heretofore dismissed as counter productive, are not the irrational force spurned so long by science and philosophy, but may be a very complex iterative process for sifting order out of chaos. Denning, who initially managed the development of the World Bank's information networking system capability, in examining why story is such a powerful tool at the turning point in the formation of the knowledge economies⁶ and cultures comes closest to describing the link between story and complexity:

One reason why we live in a soup of narratives, why narratives permeate our lives and understanding, is that resorting to narratives is the way in which we

⁶ The heightened emphasis placed on knowledge and knowledge economies has multiple meanings and interpretations as McGrath (2001) usefully points out. The World Bank's adoption of knowledge economy discourse is a contested, partial one, which in many ways sets the tone for the adoption of the terminology of other key players in the development community (King and McGrath 2000).

have learned to cope with our world of enormously complex phenomena. Even while scientists and schoolteachers have been telling us to abandon these unscientific approaches, and adopt linear abstract thinking, the human race has used its common sense and stubbornly—to some extent surreptitiously—stuck with narratives as the most usable tool to cope with complexity. We have used the narrative language of stories as the most appropriate instrument to communicate the nature and shape and behaviour of complex adaptive phenomena. Stories capture the essence of living things, which are quintessentially complex phenomena, with multiple variables, unpredictable phase changes, and all of the characteristics that the mathematics of complexity has only recently begun to describe. The fact that narratives are not mathematically precise, and in fact are full of fuzzy qualitative relationships, seems to be a key to their success in enabling us to cope with complexity . . . Of course, narrative is only an analogy and hence partially inaccurate, but no more of an analogy than a linear equation. (Denning 2000: 112-113)

This quote re-emphasises that cultural resources should not be under-estimated in trying to understand change or the resistance to change. In the educational settings as in economic ones, they are important not because they are an equal force, not because they are free of the constraints of economic or physical factors, but because, if there are places in the equation where feedback between terms can quickly amplify way beyond the relative weight of the initial terms, it is here. Not that it always will, but that that is where the potential lies. Why else, as Okri asks, have dictators always kept such close watch on their poets? Humour, carnival, as Bakhtin so fervently and yet chaotically articulates, is the butterfly. How to interact with it in such a way as to learn better its temperament without crushing its wings?

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER AND PRACTITIONER DEVELOPMENT

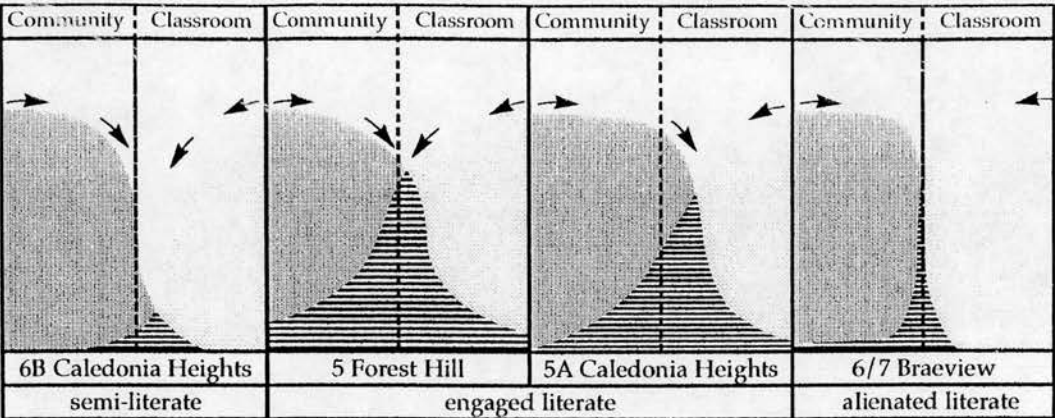
Informed by a dialogic ethos which integrates complexity conceptions, some circumspect points in reference to teacher training and development can be made. The starting point for doing so is to highlight that the teachers themselves across all settings pointed out that teacher training had not prepared them to help children make important communication transitions or to deal with other language issues the teachers themselves described as crucial to their work. Were these issues not covered, or where they presented in such a way as to be unrecognisable or seem irrelevant? I offer below a few new ways of seeing and thereby discussing what the issues may be.

Each chapter has dealt with the continuity or disparity between differing discourse in depth. These chapters can be encapsulated in a diagram or map in the sense of social cartography (Paultson 1997)⁷. The curve starting from the left of each map represents children's degree of fluency in home language and discourse styles and the extent to which this discourse is permitted in the classroom. The curve starting from the right of each map represents the standard discourse and the degree to which it overlaps or becomes integrated with children's home discourse. What becomes evident through this depiction is that in the two middle maps of Ms. Heath and Mr. Lewis' classrooms there is a greater mix between discourses, which I would argue allows for greater degrees of engaged literacy. These maps are a visual interpretation or representation of observation, not the result of inputting quantified data into a graph. What I am trying to depict here is that where there is a lack of intermediate forms and experimentation that can act as a bridge, there is also a lack of standard proficiency attainment. It is important to stress the presence of intermediate bridging discourse is not solely the responsibility of the teacher but is affected by a combination of factors: children's disposition to school, the proximity of their home language style to standard styles, the overall community culture and its similarities with or differences to the school's culture, the existence of other sites of literacy within the community and children's involvement with them.

7 According to Paulston social maps should be offered:

as a method of illustrating our vigorous social milieu composed of a profusion of narratives. This is done with an emphasis on layered or imbricated fields of perception and intertextual space, an approach which draws in part upon the technique of chorography, that is, the mapping of domains or regions, and the ideas of Arjun Appadurai concerning disjunctures in the links among space, place, citizenship and nationhood (1997: 140).

Fig. 9.1 Maps of dialect interaction in the classroom

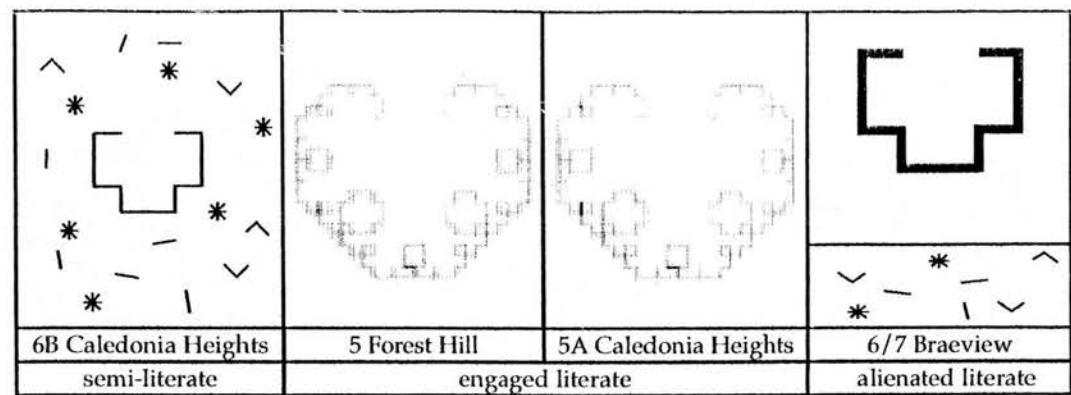


The dynamics depicted here contribute to three different forms of literacy: semi-literacy, in which standard forms are only ever partially learned; engaged literacy, in which forms are learned and integrated into children’s purposeful use of language; and alienated literacy, in which the forms are dutifully learned but not applied to on-going life tasks or choices.

COMPLEXITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The possibility of intermediate forms and opportunities for interpretation when dialogue is permitted in class can be represented in terms of richness of fractal reiteration. If only the teachers voice or discourse is allowed, as in Mr. Ruhl’s class, or if the teacher’s and student’s communications fail to meet, as in Mr. Noble’s class the components of fractal reiteration remain separate and do not integrate into a pattern. When both teacher and student voices can engage with each other, the exchange can be represented as fractal components coming together in a pattern, that grows richer and more detailed the longer the interaction is sustained. What the fractal reiteration can also be used to depict is the tendency for good conversations not to end but to bifurcate, generating further side discussions forming a network of interpretation and re-interpretation.

Figure 9.2: Conversation Possibilities in the Classroom Depicted as Fractals



Source: Lévy Fractal from <http://mathworld.wolfram.com>

The classrooms can also be likened to complex adaptive systems. The study of complex systems has revealed that in a system where there is either too much order or too much chaos, very little that is adaptive or innovative happens. The in-between, flexible state, of complexity, though not predictable, is the one capable of creating transformation. Drawing on this complexity model, I would liken Mr. Ruhl's six and seven composite class to a system where there is too much order for innovation. The two fifth grade classes, taught by Ms. Heath in Scotland, and Mr. Lewis in Jamaica, are like the border situation between chaos and order where complexity becomes active, where a tolerance for random or unpredictable activity does generate new learning and communication possibilities. The other sixth grade class in Jamaica, which Mr. Noble taught, is perhaps an example of too much chaos, or a warning that not just any mix of chaos and structure is workable.

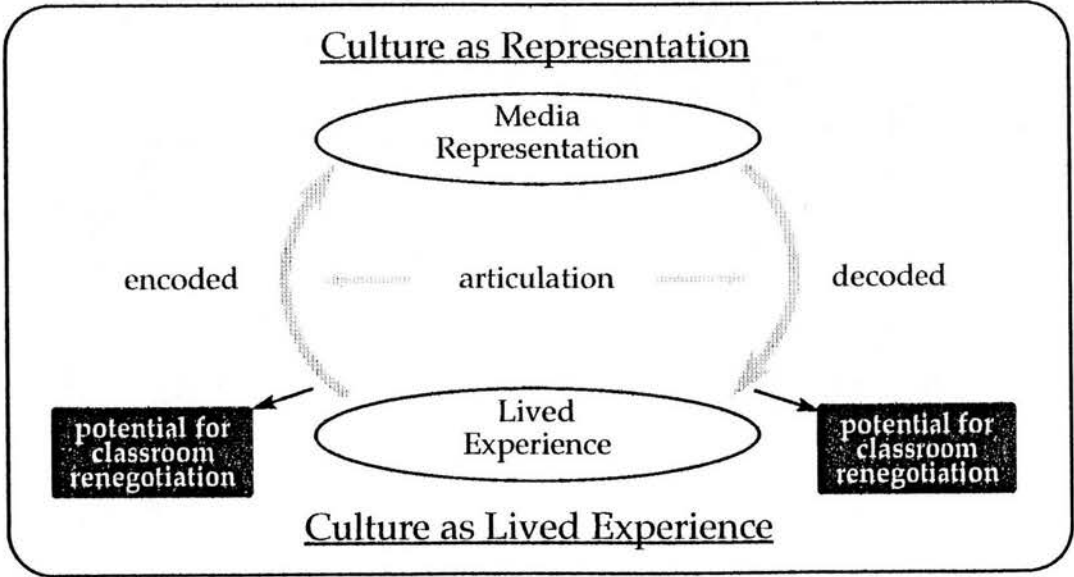
Perhaps, the single most important question to come from the study is, how might an increased appreciation of complexity, its more detailed use as a metaphor, help the teacher in each classroom better respond to the their classroom context? Can it empower, or encourage them to view "chaos" as potential creativity? Can it increase their sensitivity to the complexity children bring to the classroom? Can it help them develop an "education for uncertainty" (King quoted in Louisy 2001: 426) that will better help their students cope with the globalisation era?

Children explore metaphor, analogy and symbolism in complex ways that can build critical thinking and problem solving skills, however, there need to be modes to translate this from one context to another. The importance and the intricacy of the translation process should not be underestimated. If valued and encouraged in the

school setting, children’s engagement with popular culture can be developed so as to become a valuable component of life-long learning strategies, enabling students to make important transitions throughout their educational, civic, and economic careers.

Dialogic inclusion of popular culture in the classroom has consequences not only for the forms children are able to master, but the meanings they derive from them. Returning to Hall’s conception of articulation it is important to point out that classrooms are positioned between culture as representation and culture as lived experience. As many educationalists are pointing out⁸ Giroux (1992) perhaps foremost among them, the classroom is a site of critical engagement with, rather than simple transmission of, cultural forms. Recalling Hughes (1988), dialogic interaction in the classroom can involve playing with and reinterpreting the very metaphors of education so that new hybrid metaphors more meaningfully suited to the immediate context can be articulated. The diagram below suggests where the classroom may open out the articulation process to wider negotiation amongst children and teachers and where themes of violence, justice, and identity can be playfully challenged revised and transformed:

Figure 9.3: Classroom as possible site of Hall’s articulation



(source: adapted from Tomlinson 1991: 61)

8 (Crowther, Hamilton, Tett 2001; The New London Group 1996; Broadfoot 2000)

Henry characterises Glissant as suggesting this very possibility:

. . . a project of creolization, (is) one in which intellectual workers would re-enter the long-concealed areas of our imagination and undo the binary oppositions and negative evaluations that block African and European elements from creatively coming together. These subterranean voyagers should strive to open blocked arteries and channels. (Henry 2000: 88)

When Mr. Lewis asks his class when do they think Christmas falls in the year, I believe he is opening up a space for them to do precisely what Glissant envisions as necessary, and no less. Initially it seems a very simple or even absurd question, yet, there are deeper carnival dimensions to it. He is asking an open question, not a rhetorical one, a question that has more than one answer, that invites many perspectives each carrying their own particular political, historical and existential meanings to enrich the discussion.

Noticeably it was the younger teachers with more diverse educational and community experience who were willing to open their classrooms up to become a forum for the articulation of popular culture. They had a more intuitive practice. My concern is that they will gradually, over time, adapt to the prevailing institutional practices. This concern brings to mind Moll's (1994) point that in order for teachers to remain sensitive within the classroom they have to get out of the classroom.

What possibilities were there for them to get out of the classroom? In the Jamaican context conditions are such that teachers are obliged to extend their educated and educating role into the community to serve as Sunday school teachers, officers of community groups, as well as in more informal instances. Moreover, on their teacher's salary they often cannot afford a car. Their journey to and from work necessitates a more engaged interaction with the surrounding community than if they could seclude themselves in a private car. Compartmentalisation and specialisation in the Scottish context has reduced the necessity for and the legitimacy of teachers taking a role in the immediate community. Could their participation be planned back into the structure? Broadfoot notes that the boundaries between education itself and other activities in life themselves are breaking down, and that the worlds of work and home, leisure and study are becoming inextricably related, causing an "erosion of modernist conceptions of education as a defined and organised form of activity" (2000: 369). A complexity informed education response to this condition will examine how this process of erosion is beneficial, and how it can be

complemented by adapting educational structures. The place of story within such processes should not be underestimated:

In an age of information overload, oral story telling remains as important as ever before in human culture. Personal acts of memory and oral communication reaffirm the primacy of human capacities and values, and offer vital clues to attitude, identity and culture on individual and collective levels. Storytelling stimulates memory through both the visual and verbal imagination, making people both better communicators and better listeners or interpreters. This constant transaction between the creative storyteller and the imaginations of those who receive the stories builds community and may underpin a capacity for shared vision and action. The personal feeds the collective while the storytelling collective nourishes the personal. (Smith, 2001: 2-3)

There are opportunities in both countries for the interface between school, home and community to be reconfigured to open up the more integrated kinds of relationships I suggest would be helpful. Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) is currently funding in Jamaica a project that combines development of early childhood literacy with general community literacy and development projects (New Horizons Project). These projects are based on similar concerns to those stimulating the family literacy movement within Britain. However, as mentioned in the context chapter, most family literacy work is focused on early education to the neglect of the complex and contested needs of families and children further along their educational careers.

Innovative implementation of family literacy projects could not only increase meaningful and useful dialogue within communities but also generate changes in dialogue on a larger scale. The Caribbean is a site of dramatic complexity and fluid change side by side with the obdurate retention of rigid stratification. There are some very intractable issues concerning education specifically to do with the role of language within education, which are only reinforced by the increasing stress that changing economic conditions place on Jamaican society. Unless the terms of the argument can be viewed from new perspectives, unless there are new channels and forums for dialogue, the counterproductive debates will continue that only reinscribe the dysfunctionality producing the flat line literacy and exam pass rate. The debates which reinscribe a sense of restricted choices, "miss if you cyan read you cyan go nowhere" could be said to resemble the rigidity of Mr. Ruhl's classroom. Could an expanded practice of family literacy give rise to forums of experiencing education that would feed into a debate that resembled more the enlivening,

generative interactivity of Ms. Heath and Mr. Lewis' classrooms? It is important to see where this kind of interactivity can be reproduced at differing levels of scale.

THE HALF THAT HAS NOT BEEN TOLD

I first came across this phrase in Erna Brodber's novel *Myal* (1988). It refers to that in the African Diaspora experience that does not find expression in Anglo culture. It is the more painful half of the Diaspora experience. I quote it aware that of the children and teachers' experiences that I have recounted here, "the half has not been told". I have caught fleeting glimpses and missed perhaps much of the underlying context. Did I get out of the classroom enough? Did I stay in the classroom enough? To bring back to mind the terms of theoretical engagement, did I achieve a "fusion of horizons" (Serpell: 1993)? The answer is not easy in the sense that Jamaican's mean when they say, "yuh no easy yuh know?" Various participants will have differing perspectives on how well they were understood. Though a great deal of attention was paid to trying to balance the work I did in each class, the portraits that emerge of each class are very different, and are themselves a dynamical mix, not wholly within my control. Indeed, I learned the most some times when I realised the controls I sought to impose on the study were unworkable. In the end there is a gender balance of sorts, two classroom depictions focusing more on the girls of the class, two exploring the classroom more from the boys' perspective, but this has more to do with the individual students with whom rapport led to productive discussions and could quite easily have been different. In seeking to portray a range of activities across the classroom experience that they might cross-contextualise each other, I could not follow the threads of each individual's stories. However, there are distinct individuals that do come to the fore in each classroom around whom meanings and interpretations seem to coalesce.

FURTHER VOICES

There are ways in which I can see this study is a tale half told that could be usefully continued in a number of directions. There is a need for further understanding of the ways boys encode strategic thinking within embodied knowledge. A more nuanced understanding of the variable mix of cooperation, aggression and negotiation that characterises their play with violence is needed to meaningfully engage with them. As Limón (1994) has proposed, playing with the tropes of violence can be a means

of converting larger, structural forms of violence into terms more manageable. Through the inversion of violence a sense of solidarity and resilience can be achieved. This is not to say violence is thereby rendered harmless, or sheds its other meaning, but that a full appreciation of the role that violence plays, particularly in Dance Hall culture, cannot be achieved without taking these empowering dimensions into consideration. Bakhtin's conceptions will continue to be of importance in understanding the complex and paradoxical transitions and transpositions of violence and play, sense and nonsense. Murray's concluding point in an article that examines what relevance Bakhtin's concept of carnival might have for Martinique, is also one I would like to make

We must allow these Carnival performances to remain symbolically open actions, viewing them as verbs (actions) rather than nouns (objects); or better, let us think of them as culturally specific "dialogues" which, in relation to other (possibly more powerful) dialogues, contribute to the making and unmaking of ideas about gender, sexuality, self and society. (2000: 109)

Further research needs to keep in focus not only the carnival qualities of violence but also its cutting edge. It is important to further explore the consequences of the predominance of images of violent young black males, and the violence these representations do to young black males. This depiction of violence:

works to sustain a repertoire of relationships between black men, imago and cultural fantasy that continues to have a distorting and necessarily violent effect on how black men learn to see themselves and one another. Hung by our dreaming, then blinded by the dreams of culture. (Marriott 2000: xiv)

In examining the effects film fantasies have on the viewer's dreams, Marriott quotes Baldwin's observation, "no one makes his escape personality black" (2001: xiii). The heroes that the Jamaican boys in this study most frequently identified with in their play with violence were Jackie Chan and Walker Texas Ranger. What this indicates about the definitions and uses of racial identities in the particular historical and social context of Jamaica bears further careful consideration.

Another vein of useful exploration would take up an examination of the differences in narrative forms. The resources children drew upon in Scotland seemed fractured, and much more market driven than in the Jamaican setting. Comparing the two Scottish settings, the ability to renegotiate market-driven messages seemed to vary widely in the two communities. The children in the context of less purchasing power and thereby with less agency in relation to market trends at the same time seemed to place more importance on brands and to be less sophisticated about reading them,

tending to adopt them as received. Perhaps the arena in which resistance is carried out I did not see or recognise. Both comparisons serve to point out that further attention could usefully be paid to the interface between technology and humanity (Latour 1988). Broadfoot (2000) cites a related piece of research by Csikzentmihalyi (1990) which suggests in cultures with the highest levels of external distractions and stimuli, individuals were the most likely to experience boredom and frustration, rather than "flow" in their daily lives. Flow here means activity pursued for its intrinsic worth. The conclusion to draw from this is not a simple one of more technology more boredom and passivity in the culture. Rather the ways in which new technologies circulate and are adapted for cultural uses and the extent to which they are taken up needs to be examined in order to understand what 'cyborg' (Starr 1991) possibilities are emerging. How technology affects children's experience of culture as representation, culture as lived experience and culture as a mixture of both is also worth further attention.

Finally, there are two aspects of the study, which, in my continued development as a researcher, I will re-examine. In the course of this study I had hoped to learn more about the children's home culture, particularly more about children and parents' interaction. I found this particularly hard to research. In very different ways those interactions were well guarded. Past a certain point I had to re-think what the justification could be for trying to get around that guard.

Although in some sense I believe this study is too teacher centred, in other respects it was neither participatory enough nor accessible enough. The process of translating theoretical concerns, so that they made sense in the particular context in which the teacher found him or herself, needed more attention. In that the study heightened my awareness of issues with both teachers and parents it has been a valuable lesson.

FINAL VOICES: EVALUATION FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Yet, it is not only my evaluation of the study that should be given space here⁹. There are three evaluation responses I want to share in closing. I chose the form of a storyboard to elicit evaluations from children in Jamaica. Two reasons underpin this

⁹ There are evaluation materials from Scotland. They are not as critical, and were used as an opportunity to thank me. This heightened my awareness of the need to elicit evaluation more explicitly and in a variety of formats in the second cycle of research in Jamaica. See appendix for the Forest Hill teacher's summary remarks.

choice. This form was the result of negotiations about activities and therefore a form which the children had some joint ownership of and familiarity with. I had also come to realise children might argue points in stories that they would not dare to raise more directly. The first set of evaluation responses are those of one of the more forthright participants in the small group session with the fifth grade class. The second set, is one that I wrote down at the same time as the children to gain some sense of what it would feel like to be on the receiving end of this instrument. In answering it I attempted to note down children's responses to my presence that I thought they themselves might be too polite to record. The third set of responses is comprised of those I received from Mr. Lewis and Mr Noble in a more standard format.

I have framed and edited the words of teachers and children throughout the study. Even the evaluation is largely my construction; I framed the questions. It is up to the reader to decide if my authorship, this framing and editing I have done, has, nevertheless, as Bakhtin claims dialogically motivated authors can do, left room for those written about to tell their own tales, give their own views.

Evaluation, Esther, grade five:

Once Miss Beth came to our school . . . "She came to do research and to work with the Caledonian Heights Primary School"	<i>she wanted to know</i> "About Proverbs, Patwa and she wanted to know the difference between English and Patwa. She loved Anancy stories."	so we spent time with her doing . . . "researches, find out about patwa, about Anancy stories and doing workshops on Wednesday."
and talking about . . . Patwa, Teacher, Ministry of Education and Talking about why teachers should not beat children.	The things we didn't like or didn't understand about her visit . . . Why she have to go back so quick and why she couldn't stay longer.	The things we did like . . . The things we did like was about her behaviour how she reacted and she teaches me how to behave. She is very innocent.
We learned . . "Stories, Games, Songs"	We will remember her visit most for . . "Her behaviour, How she did researchers"	What I want her to remember most about me and Caledonia Primary is . . "That I am still praying for her. And Ade and that Caledonia Heights is a nice school."

Evaluation, Beth, researcher:

<p><i>Once Miss Beth came to our school . . .</i></p> <p>and she was overwhelmed by laughter, shouts, dashing children, shrieks, shouts, songs, smiles, questions, requests, tugs, pinches, hugs</p>	<p><i>she wanted to know . . .</i></p> <p>how stories exist for us—in what context—what moods have yet to become stories –</p>	<p><i>so we spent time with her doing . .</i></p> <p>performing our games, songs dances, translating how we usually speak to a form she could understand, telling stories, listening to our voices validated, put in a permanent form, drew, worked on putting stories in different forms, versions</p>
<p><i>and talking about . . .</i></p> <p>violence * (note added later: nobody mentioned that instead “how to behave”)</p>	<p><i>The things we didn’t like or didn’t understand about her visit . . .</i></p> <p>when she asked us to respond in a form of talking uncharacteristic of the turns we usually take</p>	<p><i>The things we did like . . .</i></p> <p>games, being able to answer questions, talk feel special</p>
<p>We learned . .</p> <p>she was different some of her language different ways to talk and think about stories</p>	<p>We will remember her most for . . .</p> <p>being a foreigner that took an interest</p>	<p>What I want her to remember most about me and Caledonia Primary is . .</p> <p>to bring us something back that we are special</p>

Teacher Evaluation, Mr. Lewis (5A) and Mr. Noble (6B):

1. What activities or questions did you find helpful?

Mr. Lewis: The set induction before lessons were quite useful, it stimulated the children. Role playing was also useful, students enjoyed the activities and benefited a whole lot.

Mr. Noble: The researcher’s frequent involvement of students in group activities, the taping of their verbal responses and the use of drawing as a means of communicating their thoughts/feelings. These were particularly helpful in developing students’ awareness of different learning strategies

2. What assumptions or ideas that the researcher brought with her were problematic or unrealistic?

Mr. Lewis: The idea that most pupils find the transition from creole to standard English difficult, especially when writing.

Mr. Noble: None really, except in one instance where students were required to create comic stories. Their limited artistic skills in drawing and experience in creating a story line was a setback in more accurate completion of given tasks.

3. If a researcher were to come again what would you like them to do differently?

Mr. Lewis: Working with small groups left out the majority of the class which were disappointed.

Mr. Noble: This of course would entirely be dependent on the researcher's purpose. I would hardly want to influence any modification of their prescribed plan unless either party – researcher and sample – were to be at a disadvantage.

4. What advice would you give them?

Mr. Lewis: Try to incorporate all students. Some of them felt left out.

Mr. Noble: My advice to such persons would be to prepare for the unexpected; that conditions might not always be conducive to meeting their expectations therefore, a great deal of flexibility is required; to come with an open mind and not with pre-conceived notions.

5. What would you like the researcher to remember most about your class and your time together?

Mr. Lewis: The enthusiasm displayed by the students.

Mr. Noble: The complex situations that exist are not unique and can be remedied through some policy changes and the implementation of newer techniques. The usefulness of the latter was demonstrated during the researcher's brief interactions with the students thereby setting the tone for continuity on the teacher's part.

These written documents were one form of evaluation. As time drew to a close in each setting, I took opportunities as they arose in whole class discussion, in individual interviews, in spontaneous conversation between activities to raise the topic of my presence, the experience of the research activities and my impending departure. How fieldwork is concluded, how goodbyes are offered provides another kind of commentary on the research and the relationships that it grew out of. Ms. Heath's class threw a surprise party for me and showered me with all kinds of various creations and performances. Mr. Ruhl briefly thanked me formally in front of the class, leaving any further closure to the informal conversations I had outside of the scheduled routine.

At Caledonia Heights the children themselves took advantage of the fluidity of the school structure to create their own ways of saying goodbye. On the last day I was

present at Caledonia Heights, several of the girls excused themselves from class and took it upon themselves to sort, tidy and label all the various drawings and writings they had done, carefully stapling them into individual folders with their names on them. The boys of 6B enacted quite a different closing ritual a little later in the afternoon.

Often they had asked if they could be allowed not only to tape with me, but to take the tape recorder away amongst themselves. Always I had declined, not wanting to have to replace, or even sure that I could, if they should break it, in one of the frequent fights that broke out. However, on this the last day, I reasoned, I had done my last interview, it was their turn. True, fights did break out, but someone was always careful to carry the tape recorder out of harms way, usually Daniel. Between fights the boys managed to put together a pretty impressive impromptu concert on tape. When they finished, they labelled, packaged the tape and gave it to me as a present. The image of them, grouped on top and around the battered wooden desks, reconfiguring them as a stage for their performance, their movements both coordinated and distinctive, each with their own characteristic gestures punctuating their seamlessly synchronised performance is what I would like to serve, not as the last word of this study, but as the last gesture/lyric/ symbol/utterance, the last turn in this dialogue.

Tell a gal you no beg
An' you no sponge
A gal 'ungry, cyan buy her lunch
Comin like stale crackers, loose every crunch,
Not a bag juice, much less a natural fruit punch.

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Item 1: Example of Malibu Advertising Campaign:
"Imagine if we took life this seriously"



Item 2: Language Arts Weekly Targets from Curriculum Guide used at Caledonia Heights

GRADE 3: TERM 1		WEEKS 1-4	
LANGUAGE ARTS		LANGUAGE ARTS	
WEEKS 1 and 2: GENERALIZATIONS:		WEEKS 3 and 4: CONCEPTS GENERALIZATIONS (Continued)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Language has its own structure. The basic unit of language structure is the sentence. 2. It is important to listen to words carefully in order to speak, read and write correctly, using Standard English structures accurately. 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. When pupils participate in dramatizing scenes from Bible stories, folk tales, nursery rhymes, Anancy stories; also scenes from Social Studies, Science, Mathematics and other areas; these activities help to bring them to real life experiences. 	
<p>CONCEPTS/GENERALIZATIONS: Teacher note that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (a) Recalling specific facts is one means of assessing the pupils' ability to comprehend. (b) The sentence is an important unit in any language exercise; (c) Pupils need to recognise consonant blends. 2. (a) Letter writing is one means of communication; (b) Handwriting is a graphic representation of a language through a specifically accepted system. It is the graphic relation of the phonetic alphabet 3. (a) The pronoun, like other parts of speech such as the noun and verb has plural forms, but pronouns indicate number in different ways. (b) Tense is the characteristic of verbs which convey the idea of the time when an action is done or will be done. 4. Punctuation, e.g. use of the full stop, marks the end of a sentence. 5. The dictionary is one source of easily retrievable information/material because of alphabetical ordering. 		<p>CONCEPTS/GENERALIZATIONS: Teacher note that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (a) Pupils need to recognise and use consonant blends as a means of producing new sounds. 2. For pupils to follow directions they need to develop their listening/reading comprehension. 3. (a) Pupils should: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) recognise that a sentence is: a group of words put together to make sense; (ii) a group of words beginning with a capital and sometimes ending with a full stop; (iii) sometimes a statement, that tells something. It ends with a full stop mark (.); (iv) sometimes a question, that asks something. It ends with a question mark (?); (v) sometimes a request or command, that asks for or orders something. It ends with a full stop. The subject 'you' is understood e.g. Go; Come; Run. 4. Pupils should understand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the concept of number one/more than one, that is singular and plural, and how these are identified; (ii) that the present continuous tense is formed by using part of the verb "to be" and verb + ing e.g. am/is + eat + ing; was/were + eating; (iii) that punctuation marks e.g. (.) fullstop and (,) comma, assist us in understanding sentences. 5. Pupils should know that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the dictionary is one source of easily retrievable information because of alphabetical ordering. (ii) drama is a meaningful and pleasant means of making scenes from all subject area more real to pupils. 	

LANGUAGE ARTS

LANGUAGE ARTS

LANGUAGE ARTS

WEEKS 5 and 6:

CONCEPTS/GENERALIZATION: Teacher note that:

1. (a) The sound system of the language has to be learned by the pupils to assist them in speaking, reading and writing;
- (b) pupils understanding of the spoken or written word is realised as they develop skill in finding key words, main ideas or the central thought of a passage;
2. (a) To expand sentences for descriptive writing pupils need:
 - (i) specific words to create a picture;
 - (ii) details that create the feeling or mood;
 - (iii) details that appeal to the senses;
 - (iv) punctuation marks (,) (.) and capital letters to begin sentences, in order to create the desired effect.
- (b) Letter writing, (friendly) is a usual part of daily communication; writing should be legible as it is the graphic representation of the sounds of the language;
- (c) contractions are formed when a letter or letters is/are sometimes omitted from a word, then the remaining portion is combined with another word, e.g. To form a contraction from "I will" omit "will" from "will", join off "I" forms "I'll". The apostrophe is used to show where letter letters were omitted.
- (d) Tense is the elements of verbs that show time.

WEEKS 5 and 6:

CONCEPTS/GENERALIZATIONS: (Cont'd)

4. (c) Nouns/Pronouns (subjects) and verbs (predicate) both have number and person and should agree in these aspects of their structure;
- (d) compound words are formed when two whole words are combined to form one new word with a meaning of its own e.g. 'horse' and 'shoe' together form 'horse-shoe' also 'toothbrush' combined form tooth brush;
5. The dictionary is one source of easily retrievable information because of alphabetical ordering;
6. Dramatizing stories and writing scripts is one way of reinforcing language and understanding ideas in the context area.
7. Pupils should listen, speak for various reasons e.g. to get the facts, to follow directions, to get main ideas.

WEEKS 7 and 8:

CONCEPTS/GENERALIZATIONS: Teacher note that:

1. (a) Sounds in language are important as the mind mediates between sound and meaning; blends are therefore important;
- (b) Information or an idea is sometimes drawn from material presented in speaking or writing by finding meaning beneath the words of the writer or speaker; that is to infer ideas.
2. (a) Word pictures may be created to describe what the speaker/writer had to say/wrote

WEEKS 7 and 8:

CONCEPTS/GENERALIZATION: (Cont'd)

2. (b) Telegrams contain the essence of main ideas of any communication;
- (c) Letters are important means of communication. Sentences correctly sequenced around a topic develop each paragraph.
3. (a) Relationship exist between ideas, time and space so sequence of tense of main verbs in a given passage must be retained. In writing continuous prose (paragraph, letter, report) or poetry, the sequence of tense of main verbs should be maintained throughout the presentation;
- (b) Nouns, Pronouns, (subject) and verbs (action words) must agree in number and person.
4. Alphabetical ordering regularises words listed in a dictionary.
5. Dramatising stories helps pupils find themselves through role-playing.
6. Listening, speaking are skills to be developed as the pupils develop over-all.
7. That listening and speaking activities in Standard English are necessary for the reinforcement of the skills of using the structure of the language.

Item 3 Notes for Shelter remedial programme

NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

Helping pupils experience success

"Success breeds success" and "encouragement sweetens labour". Remember that some of these pupils are low-level achievers who have not been very successful in school. Please make the summer school experience one that is success-oriented, unforgettable, and worthwhile for every child.

Some pointers to consider:

- *Believe in the children and show them that you do.*
- *Identify at least one skill/talent that the pupil possesses.*
- *Design tasks/ assignments so that the pupil can use his/her skills.*
 - *Make tasks as "doable" as possible.*
 - *Give clear and concise instructions.*
 - *Give enough background information.*
 - *Give enough time for completion of tasks.*
 - *Give timely feedback.*
- *Use tutoring tactics.*
 - *Put pupils in leadership positions.*
 - *Provide different ways for pupils to show achievements*
 - i. *Give someone who is a poor writer a checklist and give him/her the task of recording*
 - ii. *Allow him/her to draw or diagram answers.*
- *Listen to students. Give them credit for their thoughts. Build their confidence.*
"That's a good idea, John/Mary."
- *Take pupils out of the regular classroom atmosphere. Encourage them to talk about their fears and successes.*
- *Allow pupils to make choices.*
- *Call pupils by name.*
- *Foster positive attitudes.*
 - *Point out and praise pupil's contribution, however small.*
 - *Encourage efforts.*
 - *Give positive reinforcements for completing a task.*
 - *Give bonus points.*
 - *Let the pupil know you recognise the difficulty he/she is experiencing and that you will help as much as possible.*
 - *Reward with intangibles as well as tangibles where possible.*
 - *Encourage journal writing, or creating logs or webs.*
- *Avoid making negative comments in front of pupils about pupils or anyone else.*

SECTION 3 - COMPREHENSION

Difficulties

Basic comprehension is necessary before real appreciation and deeper comprehension is possible. This section attempts to describe strategies, which teachers can use in the development of basic comprehension.

It should be remembered that the poorer reader with average or **better capacity** (the retarded reader) will ordinarily comprehend at a level above his or her word-recognition level.

Suggested Strategies



- ❖ Have children indicate where in a poem or story they first knew it was sad, joyful, humorous, mysterious, etc. (Finding mood expressed by author)
- ❖ Give oral, dittoed questions such as the following:
 - A bird is fast but a snail is _____
 - The clouds are above, but the ground is _____
 - A horse runs on legs, but a car runs on _____(Inference)
- ❖ Prepare a three or four-sentence story that indicates a sequence of events. Cut it apart by sentences. Pupils are to rearrange the sentences in proper sequence. (Sequence and organization).
- ❖ From a story pupils have just read, list words and phrases that describe emotional reactions of the characters. Ask pupils to tell which story character experienced each emotional reaction and why. Encourage pupils to refer to specific passages in the story to support their viewpoints. (Inference, tone and mood).
- ❖ Anticipate vocabulary need to daily lessons. Present these words in varying contexts, discuss them, and make them as concrete as possible. (Word meaning).
- ❖ Have child make up new titles for the story. (Main idea)
- ❖ During the discussion of the story, ask "Why" questions – why various characters thought, behaved, and reacted as they did. See whether pupils can find passages in the story to support their answers. (Relationships)

- ❖ Recall an incident in the story and ask pupils to tell what happened before, during, and just after the incident. This can also be done by asking pupils to give a comment of one of the characters. (Sequence of events)
- ❖ Conduct oral discussion periods, encouraging different points of view and ideas supported by facts found in the reading. (Main idea)
- ❖ Skim through a part of the story with children, asking them to identify the main idea of each sentence read and let children tell the main idea of each paragraph. (Referents)
- ❖ Have pupils look through a story or article and divide it into parts, discussing each part. Have them suggest another way to divide the main action of each part. (Organization)

Use workbook materials designed to improve comprehension.

- ❖ After a story is read, encourage pupils to make a prediction about what will happen next. (Inference)
- ❖ Skim a story with children, reviewing the main idea of each paragraph. Ask children to formulate a summary sentence for each paragraph. Then ask them to go back on the text and have children reread the paragraph to which the summary refers. Have pupils tell the story from memory. (Main idea)
- ❖ Have pupils bring recipes, instructions for a new building, etc. and read the directions for mixing starch, etc. Discuss the need for a clearly stated sequence of directions. (Following directions)
- ❖ Have children find phrases showing interesting, ways of expressing ordinary ideas. (Figurative language)
- ❖ Have children read the directions for a new game to play during recess and present the rules to the rest of the class. (Following directions)
- ❖ Have pupils match headlines to newspaper articles. (Main idea)

Have pupils list or discuss the techniques an author uses to make them like or dislike a character. (Intent of author)

Use multilevel materials for general comprehension (Reading Laboratory) special aspects of comprehension (Reading for Understanding), or specific skills (Organizing and Reporting Skills Kit).

CHUNKING

Description

Chunking is a technique to encourage the student to read phrases of language that represent meaning rather than separate words. It focuses on reading phrases of text that represent a thought. Chunking facilitates comprehension and fluency by using thought units rather than word-by-word reading.

Procedure

1. The teacher chooses a passage at an instructional reading level that will take about three minutes to read.
2. The teacher tapes the student reading the passage.
3. The teacher and the student echo read the passage using meaningful phrases. In other words, the teacher reads a sentence modelling appropriate chunks of the sentence, and the student repeats the same sentence using the phrasing. The example that follows illustrates the sequence.

Text: The bright girl liked to read stories about horses.

Student reading: The / bright / girl / liked / to / read / stories / about / horses.

Teacher modelling: The bright girl/ liked to read/ stories about horses.

Student echoing: The bright girl/ liked to/ read stories/ about horses.

Teacher comment: I liked the way you chunked "read stories" Did it make more sense to you to read it that way?

4. The teacher and student continue reading the entire passage. When possible, the teacher increases the number of sentences chunked before the student repeats the model.
5. As the student's ability chunk thought units increases, the teacher ceases to model the chunking, and the student reads the passage on his own.
6. The teacher tapes the reading of the passage again.
7. The teacher and the student compare fluency, intonation, and phrasing.

Modifications

1. For the extremely slow reader, the teacher may incorporate oral chunking experiences as an intervention with multiple timed, silent readings.
2. For the beginning reader, chunking a language experience story by writing phrases from the story on 3" x 5" cards is an effective technique.

Modification

The implementation of the herringbone can be changed by first finding the facts first to writing the main idea and then looking for the facts that support this main idea.

K-W-L

Description

K-W-L is a technique used to direct students' reading and learning of content area text. Before the text is read, students write what they already know about the topic as well as questions that they would like to explore. After the text is read, students write what they learned about the topic (Ogle, 1986).

Procedure

1. The teacher chooses an appropriate topic and text.
2. The teacher introduces the K-W-L worksheet (see Figure 10-2)

What I Know	What I Want To Learn	What I Learned

Figure 10-2

K-W-L- Technique

Note: Adapted from "K-W-L: A Teaching Model that Develops Active Reading of Expository Text" by Donna Ogle, 1986: *The Reading Teacher*, 39, pp. 564-570. Copyright 1986 by International Reading Association, Adapted by permission

3. The students brainstorm ideas about the topic.
4. The teacher writes this information on a chart or chalkboard.
5. Students write what they know under the K ("What I know") column.
6. Together, the teacher and students categorize the K column.
7. Students generate questions they would like answered about the topic and write them in the W ("What I Want to Learn") column.
8. Students silently read the text and add new questions to the "What I Want to Learn" column.
9. After reading the selection, the students complete the "What I Learned" section.
10. The students and teacher review the K-W-L sheet to tie together what students knew and the questions they had with what they learned.

Item 4: Excerpt from *Coming Home to Teach* describing noise levels common in classrooms and teacher coping strategies

Coming Home To Teach

with a vengeance as they grappled with *Whispering Heights*—carping critics, declamatory windbags and shrieking violents. And there is the inevitable climax, the moment all the players—teachers as well as students—have been waiting for and labouring to produce.

For our school the grand finale of the year would be the field trips to elementary schools during which all tutors of the college would take part in evaluating the classroom performances of the students. It was a critical moment in the careers of the students as fledgling teachers, for if the tutors decided that any one of them couldn't carry her weight in the classroom, she would not be certified and allowed to graduate, which meant that the government would not employ her as an elementary school teacher at its annual pittance and the whole two years she had spent labouring over the scholastic asinities we had been pounding into her would have been for nothing. It was a climax that had been hinted at in the plot for months now, and suddenly it was upon us with a whimper of meetings. We met at the staff level, at committee level, at departmental level, got assignments to different schools and planned carpools. We were addressed by the principal, by the vice principal, by a team of smug education tutors gloating visibly that for the moment their specialty had finally triumphed. No one told us exactly what to do except that we should observe our students teach and grade their performances. Although there was some babbling of pedagogical mumbo-jumbo from the education tutors, we were given no criteria about what to look for, about how we should grade the students, about what to expect.

Then we scattered into the countryside with the hopeful air of a departing safari to observe our students teach.

The first school I visited turned out to be indistinguishable from the second or the third or any of the other score of schools to which I and the rest of the tutors wearily tramped for the next three weeks.

It was a cinder-block concrete building upended over the dead air of a gully, a sullen and grimy structure with a flat roof, louverless windows, and no interior walls or partitions. It squatted low-slung

Going Home To Teach

and ugly in the middle of trampled and grassless grounds looking as if it had been flattened into the earth by a giant thump. Its outer walls were painted a dreary grey stained with splashes of mud and grime. Because the building had no interior walls, the classes within were separated merely by the arrangement of desks. A row of desks and benches lined side by side and facing the east marked one class; a second row that faced the west, another. Within the single cavernous room seven or eight classes were so separated by the arrangement of desks and benches and by blackboards placed to serve as crude partitions.

It was not the repelling aesthetics, the overall grimy and airless ugliness of the concrete building or even the dimly lit and stiflingly cramped conditions that wore on your nerves and grated all livelong day at the teachers and students. It was simply that without walls to physically separate the different classes you could not hear yourself think in these suffocating bunkers while school was in session because you were awash in a continuous and unabating blare of noise. It was sometimes a roar, constant and deafening like the endless blast of a waterfall; sometimes a splatter of wild cries and shrieks and yells from odd nooks and corners of the echoing building; but most often the regulated and disciplined chants of entire classes bellowing out separately and all at once multiplication tables, historical dates, and irregular verb tenses.

"Twice times one are one, twice times two are four, twice times three are six, twice times four are eight," thirty children would be howling three feet away, while the class which you observed from an uncertain perch on the edge of a bench, would thunder in reply,

Ring rang rung
Sink sank sunk
Sing sang sung

A few feet away another thirty children would be screaming a litany of historical dates:

In 1494 Columbus discovered Jamaica
In 1655 the English captured Jamaica
In 1692 an earthquake destroyed Port Royal
In 1865 the Morant Bay rebellion 'appened

Sometimes the history teacher would lead the chant with a play of humour and Socratic questioning, and you would hear an exchange that went something like this:

"What happened in 1494, children?"

"Six times five is thirty," a clutch of banishes would shriek just then from across the room.

"Columbus discovered Jamaica!" the children would chorus happily.

"Very good," the teacher's voice would sing above the tumult like the cry of a gull over the crash of breakers.

"Then what happened in 1655?"

Hesitation and confusion. Part of the class ventured a defiant and singsong answer.

"The earthquake destroyed Port Royal!"

But a clique of dissenters blasted out in contradiction.

"The English capture Jamaica!"

"No! No! Is not de English capture Jamaica!"

"Ring rang rung! Sing sang sung! Slink slunk slunk!"

"Children! Children!"

"The boiling point of water is 100 degrees centigrade! The boiling point of water is 212 degrees Fahrenheit!"

"So what 'appened in 1655?"

"Hush you mouth, Howard. You don't even know wha' 'appened yesterday!"

"Go 'way!"

"The English capture Jamaica!"

"How dat again, class?"

"Think thought thought! Bring brought brought! Fight fought fought!"

"The English capture Jamaica, Miss!"

"Five times four is twenty! Five times five is twenty-five! Five times six is thirty!"

Suddenly a jet plane taxied menacingly towards us, its turbines whining out diaphanous,

"Oooooouu, aaatttt, ooooo!"

"So what we say 'appened in 1655 again?"

"The English capture Jamaica!"

"You sure about dat, class?"

"Six times one is six. Six times two is twelve. Six times three is eighteen."

"The English capture Jamaica, Teacher!"

"A-hoa! I just want to see if you sure 'bout dat."

I made notes about my taks to these country schools. I kept a journal on the students I visited and jotted down the grade range of effectiveness in which they seemed to me to be teaching. But I had already made up my mind that nothing short of repeated, egregious and unrepentant errors in the subject being taught would cause me to flunk a student. The thing our students were being asked to do was simply unachievable by human effort, and it did not matter how puffed up and vainglorious the education tutors became about the tomanytot written in their unreadable books. You could not effectively teach pupils who couldn't hear you, and that was that. Freud, Piaget, Skinner, none of that pontifical lot had had anything intelligent to say about how to teach a class that was squished into an cavernous and airless bunker infested by bad gully air and simultaneously blasted by the decibel equivalents of chorusing banishes, taxing jetliners, and shunting railway engines. And all the academic drivel that the college had been drip-feeding the students had so studiously ignored the horrible reality under which they would have to teach that our whole programme, the entire year of academic and pedagogical training which we had been pounding into our hapless students, struck me all at once as a sick and wrong-headed joke.

Forget the cramped and stifling conditions of these pathetic

Item 5: Assessment Criteria for Language Test Administered at Forest Hill

IMAGINATIVE : IMAGINED PERSONAL RESPONSE TO A GIVEN TOPIC/CONTEXT				WNSA01 A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE
	LEVEL A	LEVEL B	LEVEL C	COMMENT
CHOICE AND USE OF LANGUAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language conveys some sense of what happens and a simple personal preference or response which addresses the task eg adopts the appropriate character or setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language successfully describes what/what is involved and tells what happens. The language conveys some information about the given context/character and a related personal response. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The language successfully describes some particular aspects of setting/scene/circumstances and adopted character and describes some related personal feelings or thoughts. The writer has made one or two obvious attempts to engage the reader by the choice of words and expressions. 	
RELATED TECHNICAL SKILL: SPELLING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer spells commonly used words accurately (with reference to word lists and classroom displays to check if necessary). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer spells accurately most words which are familiar through frequent use (using a simple wordbank or dictionary to check spelling if necessary). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer attempts to spell less familiar words according to known spelling strategies (using a wordbank or dictionary to check spelling if necessary). 	
SELECTION AND ORGANISATION OF IDEAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer includes at least two or three details about a preference or a response relating to the topic. The writer is beginning to use the most common linking words to organise ideas (eg and, then). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The writer includes sufficient detail to make the given circumstances and the personal response clear. The details are mostly organised logically (probably chronologically) to show why the writer thinks or feels as s/he does. Common linking words are used to organise ideas into sentences (eg and, then, but, so, that). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details important to the reader's understanding of the writer's feelings or thoughts are not left out or repeated. Some attempt is made to vary the sentence structure. There is evidence of at least one attempt to mark a paragraph break. 	
RELATED TECHNICAL SKILL: PUNCTUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A capital letter and a full stop are used to mark at least one sentence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital letters and full stops are used correctly to mark more than one sentence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many sentences are accurately punctuated using commas and question marks where appropriate. 	

Item 6: Forest Hill teacher's contribution to web site
on popular culture, reviewing activities in classroom during the
study

As in many schools the school I work in has banned Pokemon artifacts for understandable reasons. Yet many of my P.5 class revolved around Pokemon and Digimon culture. Perhaps the banning in school served to fuel their keenness.

I decided to not only allow discussions about Pokemon in our classroom but to actively encourage it across the curriculum. In this way I tried to value their home and play experiences. Through activities such as drama, circle time, writing in rounds and building up stories orally in circles etc. I noticed their enthusiasm increased for this kind of activity and it provided a stimulus for further work. It achieved many positive results, such as when quiet pupils felt able to contribute to work, especially discussions, as the topic was so familiar to them they became the expert.

Through drama the pupils were given opportunities to solve conflicts/problems between characters from the Pokemon world in an increasingly complex fashion, which in turn aided them, through their active experiences, to furnish written work with details and a style of writing that they didn't previously exhibit.

Some drama sketches appeared quite energetic (violent) but the children learned acting skills to convey their actions/movements 'professionally' and conflict options were discussed. In the playground they carried this through and the incidents of playground scuffles reported to me after play times dropped dramatically. This may have also been due to the fact that the children were meaningfully engaged in play they knew how to structure (or could discuss rather than argue about what to play), by employing skills nurtured in the classroom.

Including popular culture within a range of classroom activities was more beneficial than I'd imagined. I'm pleased I purposefully spent time doing this and through an increased understanding of where the children were coming from I felt I was more able to interact successfully with the pupils at their level, which served as a great base for communication and therefore teaching.

Item 7: "Anti-Bullying Assessment Sheet" administered at Braeview during the study

Name four different types of bullying

1. racism
2. getting the blame
3. programmes
4. teasing

What is racism?

Race of the person or colour of the skin

What kind of behaviour is sometimes called bullying but is not bullying?

we confident people do it

Have you ever been bullied?

What happened to you?

getting bullied after school

What did you do about it?

told my mum

What novel did you read which had a bullying theme?

Bullies at school

Who was the author?

Theresa Breslin

How was the bullied character or characters being bullied?

She got some annoyance and started after school

How did they stop the bullying?

talk to her head teacher and stand up to her

What four things can you do if you are being bullied?

1. be all angry and ignore them
2. stand up to the bully
3. tell some one you trust
4. call the child help line